A Quarterly of New Literature

ACCENT

IRWIN SHAW: *The Veterans Reflect*
—A STORY OF THE NEXT ARMISTICE

KENNETH BURKE: *The Problem of the Intrinsic*

SEVEN MODERN FRENCH POETS:

PAUL VALERY • GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE • FRANCIS JAMMES
ES ROMAINS • JEAN COCTEAU • VALERY LARBAUD • ALAIN BOSQUET

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ACCENT

A QUARTERLY OF NEW LITERATURE

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IRWIN SHAW:

The Veterans Reflect

The bells were ringing everywhere and the engineer blew the locomotive whistle over and over as they roared up the springtime valley. The hills rolled back from the blue river and the frail green of the young leaves made them look as though pale green velvet cloth, thready and worn, had been thrown as drapery over their winter sides.

Peter Wylie sat at the window staring dreamily out at the Hudson Valley rolling sweetly and familiarly past him. He smiled when a little girl in front of a farmhouse gravely waved an American flag at the speeding train and the engineer gravely saluted her in return with a deep roar of the whistle.

Peter Wylie sat at the window of the speeding train and avoided listening to the booming voice of the gentleman talking to the pretty woman across the aisle. He stretched his legs comfortably and half-closed his eyes as he watched the green, quiet country over which, faintly, between towns, came the pealing of bells, because that morning the war had ended.

". . . Dead two years," the gentleman was saying. "His ship went down off Alaska and that was the last we heard of him. Twenty-one years old. Here's his picture, in uniform."

"He looks so young," the woman said.

"He had a blonde beard. Hardly had to shave. The ship went down in eighteen minutes . . ."

The bells were ringing, Peter thought, and the graves were full of young men who had hardly had to shave, in uniform. His two cousins on his mother's side, killed in Africa, and Martin, who had been his roommate for three years, killed in India, and all the boys from the squadron .... The graves on the plains and the mountains, the shallow graves on the hard coral islands, and the long well kept cemetery of the military dead outside the hospital which you looked at through the tall window of your ward as nurses whispered outside in the corridor and the doctors hurried fatefully by on their crepe soles. "Convenient," you said with a slow, remote wave of your hand and with what you hoped was a smile, to the nurse, who seemed always to have come from behind a screen where she wept continuously when not actually needed at a bedside. "Modern design."

"What?" the red-eyed nurse had asked blankly.

You had been too tired to explain and merely closed your eyes with the beautiful rudeness of the dying. But you hadn't died. There was a strange platter-like excavation in your abdomen and you would never really enjoy your food anymore, and you would always have to climb stairs slowly even though you were only twenty-nine now on this day when the bells were ringing, but the cemetery and the military dead were still there and here you were on a train going up the Hudson Valley on your way home to see your wife and child and the guns were quiet and the airplanes idled in the hangars and the pilots sat around and played cards and tried to remember the telephone numbers of the girls in their home towns.

You were on your way home to see your wife and child. For three years, alone at night, sleepless in strange rooms on other continents; on leave, at a bar, sleepless drinking and laughing and the brassy old juke boxes playing songs that cried *far away and long ago, far away and long ago* and all the women being earnest about the war and patriotically anxious to jump into bed with all the pilots, navigators, bombardiers, flight-sergeants, wing-commanders, meteorologists, radio-operators of the air forces of all the United Nations, including the Russian; for three years on the long droning flights across the hundred-mile ripples of the Pacific; for three years, even sometimes at the moment when the bombardier said, "OK, I'll take it from here," as the plane ducked in over the target and the anti-aircraft fire bloomed roughly about you, the faces of your wife and daughter slid through your mind, the woman's firm-boned jaw, the moody blue eyes, the wide, full mouth, familiar, loving, changing, merry, tragic, tenderly and laughingly mocking in the secret wifely female understanding of the beloved weaknesses of the man of the family—and the child's face, small, unformed, known only from photographs sent across the oceans, looking out at him through the night with sober, infant gravity . . . Three years, he thought, and tomorrow morning the train will pull into the dirty old station at Chicago and there they'll be, standing in the soot and clangor, hand in hand, the quick, delightful woman and the fat child, picking his uniform out among the other uniforms, with three years'

waiting and loving and hoping showing in the faces as he strode down the platform . . .

"Bong-bong!" shouted a little bald man, who was leading two women drunkenly down the aisle toward the diner. "Bong-bong! We did it!"

"Ding-aling! Ring out the wild bells!" The blonde woman right behind the bald man cried out. "Welcome to America!"

"We applied the crusher," the bald man told the crowded car. "The old steel spring technique. Coil back, coil back, coil back, then . . ."

They disappeared around the bend of the car over which the small sign said modestly, "Women."

Across the ocean, in the mountains of another country, a man strode out of a darkened house to the long, armored automobile waiting on the night-deserted road. Two men, bundled in army greatcoats, hurried behind him, their boots sighing softly in the damp earth of the courtyard. The chauffeur had the door open but the man stopped and turned around before he got in and looked at the dark shapes of the mountains rising behind him against the starry sky. He put his hand uncertainly to his collar and pulled at it and took a deep breath. The two men in the greatcoats waited, without looking up, shadowed by the slowly fluttering young foliage of the oaks that bordered the path. The man turned and slowly got into the car, carefully, like an old man who has fallen recently and remembers that his bones are brittle and mend slowly. The other two men sprang into the front seat and the chauffeur slammed the rear door and ran around to the front and leaped in and started the motor. The automobile sped quietly down the dark road, the noise of its going making a private and faraway *whoosh* that died on the huge and growing darkness of the mountain-circled Spring night.

In the back of the car, the man sat bolt upright, his eyes narrow and unseeing, staring straight ahead of him. Off in the hills a church bell pealed and pealed again and again, musical and lonely in the echoing darkness. The lips of the man in the back seat curled slightly, bitterly, as the sound of the pealing village-bell wavered on the wind. Germans! he thought. Five million German dead all over the world and the Russians on the road to Berlin and everything worse than 1918 and their leader skulking through the night on backroads towards the Swiss border with a chauffeur and two frightened first-lieutenants and they ring bells as though this was the day after the Fall of France! Germans! Idiots! Imitation suits, imitation rubber, imitation eggs, finally imitation men . . . What was a man expected to do with material like that? And he'd come so close . . . so close . . . The gates of Moscow. But he sat. The statue sat. Everyone else ran, the diplomats, the newspapermen, the government, and Stalin sat there and the people sat . . . Peasant. Sitting there in his burning house with his gun and his plow . . . and somehow the house didn't

burn. Storm-troopers, assault-guards, blitzkrieg veterans . . . at the gates of Moscow and they died. A little cold and they dropped like hothouse violets. So close . . . so close . . .

The bell rang more strongly and in other villages other bells answered.

They'd hang him if they caught him. He'd cried at the last Armistice, he'd hang at this . . . The British use a silk rope when they hang nobility. They wouldn't use silk on him . . .And the bells ringing all around him . . .

He leaned forward and jabbed the chauffeur fiercely in the back.

"Faster!"

The car spurted forward.

"Production," the booming gentleman across the aisle was saying to the pretty woman, who was leaning closer to him, prettily attentive. "It was inevitable. American production won this war."

Peter thought of the graves, of the English and Chinese and Australians and Russians and Serbs and Greeks and Americans who filled them, who had fought bitterly with rifle and cannon and plane across the torn fields and stripped forests where they now quietly lay, under the illusion that if the war was to be won, it was to be won by them, standing there, hot gun in hand, with the shells dropping around them and the scream of the planes overhead and the tanks roaring at them at fifty miles an hour . . .

"I know," the gentleman was saying. "I was in Washington from 1941 right to the finish and I saw. I'm in machine tools and I had my hand on the pulse of production and I know what I'm talking about. We performed miracles."

"I'm sure," the pretty woman murmured. "I'm absolutely sure." She was not as young as she had looked at first, Peter noticed, and her clothes were much shabbier than he had thought, and she looked pretty and impressed and tired and ready to be invited to dinner.

". . . Plants in seven states," the man was saying. "We expanded 400 per cent. The war's over now, I can talk freely . . ."

The war's over, Peter thought deliciously, settling deeper into his chair, and letting his head rumble pleasantly with the click of the wheels as he leaned back against the cushion, the war's over and machine-tool manufacturers who expanded 400 per cent can talk freely to women in Pullman cars and tomorrow I see my wife and child and I never have to climb into an airplane again. From now on I walk down to the station and buy a ticket when I want to go someplace and I sit down with a magazine and a whiskey and soda and the train clicks along on steel and solid gravel and the only enemy activity will be an occasional small boy throwing a rock hopefully at the bright windows of the diner flashing by. Tomorrow afternoon he would be walking slowly along the lake front in the Spring wind, hand in hand with his wife and child. "And that, darling, is Lake

Michigan. Do you know the water you took a bath in this morning? It comes right from here, especially for you. When your father was a boy he used to stand here and watch the red Indians sail by in their war canoes at forty miles an hour, reciting Henry Wadsworth Longfellow at the top of their voices . . . I can see by the look in your mother's eye that she doesn't believe me and wants an ice cream soda. I can also see by the look in her eye that she doesn't think you should have an ice cream soda so soon after lunch, but I've been thinking about buying you this ice cream soda for three years and the war's over and I don't think she's going to make too much of a fuss . . ."

And tomorrow night, they would lie, soft on their backs in the soft bed, staring idly up at the dark ceiling, his arm under her head, their voices murmuring and mingling with the distant quiet night sounds of the sleeping city, the clack and rumble from the lakefront railroad yards and the soft whisper of automobiles on the highway . . . "I slept in the same bed in Cairo, Egypt, with a boy from Texas who weighed two hundred and thirty pounds. He wanted to get in the Navy, but he was six feet six inches tall and they said he wouldn't fit on any ship afloat or building. Also he was in love with a girl he met in New York who sold gloves in Saks and he talked about her all night long. She has a 36 inch bust and she lives with four girls from Vassar in Greenwich Village and she has a scar on her right buttock six inches long that she got when she fell down iceskating and a man with racing skates ran over her. This is an improvement over sleeping with a two hundred and thirty pound Texan in the same bed in Cairo, Egypt. Yes, I'll kiss you if you want . . ."

And her voice, close to his ear, in the gentle, tumbled darkness, alive with the fresh night wind off the lake and the familiar smell of her perfume and the frail dry smell of her hair, remembered all the years deep in his nostrils ". . . And she went to the nursery school in Tucson all day while I was on duty in the hospital and they all liked her very much but she had a habit of hitting the other little boys and girls with her shovel and I had to leave her with my sister. I knew you'd laugh. Stop laughing or I'll stuff a pillow in your mouth, Mr. Veteran. You can afford to laugh, out flying around ten thousand miles away with nothing to worry about but Japs and Germans. Wait till you're a mother and seven young mothers descend upon you to tell you your child has swiped at their children with a wooden shovel every day of the school term . . ." And the kiss to stop the laughter and her head under his chin after that and the slow, diminishing chuckles together for the child sleeping in the next room dreaming of other children and more wooden shovels.

And again, her hand thrown softly and possessively on his chest . . . "There's a lot more hair here than I remember."

"War. I always put on a lot of hair on my chest in a war. Any objections?"

"No. I'm well-known as a woman who's partial to hairy men. Or is

talk like that too vulgar for young soldiers? Am I too fat? I put on eight pounds since 1942 . . . Have you noticed?"

"I'm noticing now."

"Too fat?"

"Ummmmmnnn . . ."

"Tell the truth."

"Ummnnn."

"I'm going to diet . . ."

"You just wait here and I'll go down and get you a plate of mashed potatoes . . ."

"Oh, shut up. Oh, Darling, Darling, I'm glad you're home . . ."

Or perhaps they wouldn't talk at all in the beginning. Perhaps they would just touch each other's hand and weep cheek to cheek for the three years behind them and the years ahead and cling to each other desperately through the long cool night and go to his parents' farm in Wisconsin and walk hand in hand in morning sunlight slowly over the greening fields, their feet sinking into the soft loam, content in the first hours with love and silence, until finally they could sit under the wide peaceful sky, off to themselves, with the rich smell of the newly plowed fields and the watermelon-cucumber smell of the river in their nostrils, and then, finally, the words would come . . . The things he had thought on the long flights, the decisions and doubts of the thousand wartime nights, the deep deep hallelujah of his spirit as the train covered the sweet final miles between the war and home. He would tell her the things he had had to bury deep within him through the noisy, bleeding years . . . The times he had been afraid . . . the first time he had seen an enemy squadron small against the horizon, harmless looking dots, growing nearer and larger with insane speed, and the ridiculous way it made him see, over and over again, for some reason, *Acrobatics,* as it was printed in the March Field Bulletin. And at the time he had been shot, six hours away from base, on a rough day, lying bleeding on his parachute while Dennis pushed the bomber toward home, and he had managed to keep quiet for the first four hours, but had wept for the last two hours, almost mechanically, although he had felt very calm. And because he was certain he was going to die, he had for the first time permitted himself to think about whether the whole thing was worth it or not, as the plane bucked in the cold air. He could tell her how he had thought, in those long six hours, of all the boys who had lightly roared off at four hundred miles an hour and lightly and thoughtlessly, or at least silently died . . . He would be able to tell her that he had soberly decided, bullet in his belly and sure of death in the roaring plane, that it was worth it, that if he had it to do again he would leave home, wife, child, father, mother, country, and search the German bullet out of the cloud once more, part of the enormous anguish and enormous courage of all the men on sea and beach and mountain locked with him in final struggle against the general enemy. And, then, weeping, on the edge of death, as he thought,

he could let himself go . . . and for the first time, in the mist of pain, break down the barrier of reserve that had kept him, even in his most secret thoughts, from admitting even to himself how much he loved all those men behind guns—his friends, boys from the same schools, coolly diving, cannons and machine guns tearing out of their wings, at enemy bombers; the pleasant Englishmen foolishly and desperately confident of their ships, sailing formally and arrogantly into hopeless battle like Englishmen in books; the quilted Chinese rifleman standing forlornly on the brown China earth against tanks and artillery; and huge, muffled Russians, fighting by day and night and snow and rain, implacably and ingeniously and tirelessly killing, oblivious to agony or doubt, intent only on burning and crippling and starving and murdering the enemy . . . He could tell her how deep inside him he had loved all those bloody, weary, cruel, reliable men, how he had felt borne up on that huge tide of men careless of death, and had felt himself to be a part of that tide, agonized, stricken, familiar with defeat, often falsely and frivolously led, but better than the leaders, dangerous, brawling, indivisible . . . and how he had felt linked with those men for all their lives and his, closer to them even though he could not speak their language nor they his, than to his own mother and father, responsible forever for their comfort and glory as they were for his. And he could tell her of the sober exhilaration of these reflections, this deep dredging to his thoughts, this ultimate examination in the light of pain and exhaustion and terror of himself, who never before this had thought deeply or reflected much beyond the everyday cares of average life in a small town, seated at a desk from nine to five, sleeping comfortably in a quiet room in a warm house, going to the pictures twice a week, playing tennis on Sunday, worrying about whether the car was good for another year or not . . .

The long automobile sped down the winding road among the hills on its way through the night to the Swiss border. The man still sat bolt upright on the back seat, his eyes narrow and unseeing, straight ahead of him.

Victories, he thought, how many victories can a man be expected to win? Paris, Rotterdam, Singapore, Athens, Kiev, Warsaw . . . and still they kept coming . . . There was a certain limit to the number of victories that were humanly possible. Napoleon discovered, too . . . Napoleon . . . Napoleon . . . He was tired of that name. In the last days he had ordered that it was not to be spoken in his presence . . . And now they were all hunting for him, like a world full of bloodhounds . . . Germans, English, Russians, Americans, French, Austrians, Poles, Dutch, Bulgarians, Serbs, Italians . . . Well, they had reason. Fools. For a long time it hadn't been hard. The cities fell like rotten apples. But then America and Russia . . . The timing was not quite exact. In politics everything happened before schedule. In war everything happened behind schedule . . . So close, so

close . . . The Russians . . . Everything else being equal, the bells would h ringing for another reason tonight if not for the Russians . . . Just tha winter had to be the coldest in fifty years. There has to be a certain el ment of luck . . . Well, all things considered, he had had a successful caree He had started out as a nobody, with his father always yelling at him tha he'd never amount to anything and he never could hold a job . . . Toda his name was known in every home on the face of the earth, in ever jungle . . . Thirty million people had died earlier than they expected be cause of him and hundreds of cities were leveled to the ground because o him and the entire wealth of all nations of the earth had been straine by him, mines and factories and farms . . . All things considered, he ha had a successful career . . . Even his father would have to admit tha Though, to be fair, if he hadn't grabbed first, someone else would hav grabbed . . . The thing would have happened without him. He had t admit that. But he had grabbed first and the name known in every hom on the face of the earth was Hitler, not any other name . . . So close, s close . . . A little cold and they died . . . Idiots! And now they wanted t hang him. If he could only get across the border, lie low . . . Until th rest of them got tired of killing the Germans. After all, Napoleon cam back off Elba. A hundred days. With a little luck he could have stuck . . . Napoleon . . . the name was not to be mentioned. They were going to star worrying about the Russians very soon . . . The Russians, the Russians . . . the armies had been cut up, they had died by the millions . . . and yet today they were on the road to Berlin. They were going to need someon to stop the Russians and if he could only lie low for a few months, hi name would be mentioned . . . And once he got back, there'd be no mor mistakes . . . With a little luck . . .

The man on the rear seat relaxed against the cushions and a littl smile played around the raw mouth.

"I was interviewed by the Washington *Post*," the booming gentlema was saying, his voice cutting into Peter's reverie. "Right before I left And I told them straight up and down—production must not stop." Pete looked absently at the booming gentleman. He was a tall fat man with bald head, but somehow he reminded Peter of all the teacher's pets wh had ever been in his classes in grammar school . . . pink, fat face, small round, pink, satisfied mouth, always impressing everyone with how muc he knew and how much in favor he was. Peter closed his eyes and imag ined the tall, fat man in an Eton collar with a bow ties and grinned. "Sto a machine for a day," the man was saying, "and industrial obsolescenc comes a month nearer. Whether we like it or not we are geared to war time production."

"You're so right," the pretty woman murmured. Peter looked at he closely for the first time. Her clothes were shabby and she had the sam

wornout, rundown look that the whole country seemed to have, as though the war had rubbed people and things down to the grain, as though the war had kept the whole continent up too many nights, working too hard . . . Teacher's pet was bright and shining, as though he had stepped out of 1941 into a world many years older . . .

"Nobody ever had too many guns. I told them right to their faces."

"You're so right," the pretty woman murmured.

"My son was sunk off Alaska . . ." Peter tightened as he recognized the note of boasting in the voice, as though the man were saying he had been elected to an exclusive club. "My son was sunk off Alaska and I produced machine tools twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week and I have a right to talk. We got it on our hands, I told them, and we have to face the problem fair and square, what are we going to do with them . . ."

"Yes," murmured the pretty woman, hoping for dinner, over the rumble of the wheels.

He would walk slowly, Peter thought, in the evening, after dinner in the big farm kitchen, with the smells of cooking rich and fragrant in the warm kitchen air and his mother red-faced and aproned and his father tall and scrubbed and quiet, smoking his nickel cigar . . . He would walk slowly along the rutted wagon road with Laura beside him in the bright twilight, full of the warm knowledge that he was in no hurry to get any place, that he could leisurely regard the small hills, accepting the night, and leisurely listen to the last evening concert of the birds, leisurely scuff his shoes in the light country dust of the road over which armored tread had never passed, which had never known blood . . . He could tell Laura finally that of all the good things that had happened to him in this savage, ecstatic century, the best had happened in the moment when he had walked toward her on a train platform in Chicago the day after the war was over . . . He could tell her finally how tired he was, how tired he had been when bone and blood and nerve had collapsed, when no effort had ever seemed possible again, when his body had given up all knowledge of victory or defeat . . . And when somehow planes had to be flown and guns manned and swift, deadly action taken by that sodden bone and blood and nerve . . . and somehow the action taken because of the feeling deep within him that on other fields and in other skies, wearier and more desperate men were still manning guns for him and flying more dangerous skies . . . And the promise he made to himself that when it was over and he was home, surrounded by care and love, he was never going to hurry again, never knowingly perform a violent act, never even raise his voice except in laughter and song, never argue with anyone about anything . . . He wasn't going back to his job. Nine to five in a bank at a desk was no way to crown a career of bloodshed 30,000 feet over three continents. Perhaps Laura would be able to suggest something for him to do, something quiet and unhurried and thoughtless . . . But first he was going to do nothing. Just wander around the farm and teach the baby how to spell and listen

to his father explain his particular reasons for rotating his crops in his own particular way . . . Maybe two, three, five months, a year of that, as long as it took to drain off the blood and weariness, as long as it took for his crippled spirit to open the door of its wartime hospital and step out firmly . . . as long as it took . . .

"The job's just begun," the booming gentleman was saying. "Let them ring the bells. It amuses them. But tomorrow morning . . ."

"Yes," said the pretty woman, eager to agree with everything.

"We've got to face the facts. A businessman faces the facts. What are the facts? The Russians are near Berlin. Right?"

"Yes," said the woman, "of course."

"Berlin. Fine. Unavoidable. The Russians are sitting on Europe . . ."

Peter tried to close his eyes, close his ears, go back to the dear dream of the twilight country road and his wife's hand in his and the dust that had never known blood. But the man's voice tore through and he couldn't help but listen.

"As a businessman I tell you it's an impossible situation." The man's voice grew louder. "Intolerable. And the sooner we realize it, the better. The truth is, maybe it's a good thing this war was fought. Dramatizes the real problem. Makes the American people see what the real danger is. And what's the answer? Production! Guns and more guns! I don't care what those Communists in Washington say, I say the war has just begun."

Peter stood up wearily and went over to the booming gentleman. "Get out of here," he said as quietly as he could. "Get out of here and keep quiet or I'll kill you."

The booming gentleman looked up at him, his face still with surprise. His little red mouth opened twice and closed silently. His pale eyes stared harshly and searchingly at Peter's worn, bitter face. Then he shrugged, stood up, put out his arm for the lady.

"Come," he said, "we might as well eat."

The pretty woman stood up and started hesitantly, frightenedly toward the door.

"If it weren't for your uniform," the booming man said loudly, "I'd have you arrested. Armistice or no Armistice."

"Get out of here," Peter said.

The booming gentleman turned and walked swiftly after the woman and they disappeared toward the diner. Peter sat down, conscious of every eye in the car on him, regretting that he had found his next years' work placed so soon before him and crying so urgently to be done. Well, he comforted himself, at least I don't have to travel for this one.

The engineer blew his whistle on a ten mile stretch of clear track because the war was over and as the hoarse triumphant sound floated back, Peter closed his eyes and tried to think of his wife and child waiting in the noisy station in Chicago . . .

MARGUERITE YOUNG:

The White Rat

How now could body-soul's symbol be this
By love, or calculation, this white rat enraged
Caged in a theatre of emptiness,
His, a snowfall of footsteps and glittering eyes?

Nor moon, a compound of the unseen events,
Nor earth, as principle of tear or dew on flowers
Rounding, he considers now. By him are we clarified.

Who could have nurtured his body on penurious dew
Is caged, is caught like a tyrannical dragonfly
And made to actualize, O, mute actuality

In void denuded now of all but blank him
And cleaned of all but the white rat's space
And eyes like diamonds in his empty head.

Who could have walked transparent fretted on wind and waves,
Now he runs upon a branched track abstract
And is mechanical in every wintry act

And is body-soul, is the most distant hope!
Here, in this cage, Platonic double moons,
Here, in this cage, St. Augustine
Crying, O, my God, art Thou without or within?

For this rat's sensorium is his true knowledge
Nor star will shine beyond his death for him,
Nor wild rock goose be shy and wild in the dusk of foliage,
Afraid of foxes in the light of day,
Nor hoary owls like flowers skim lost in leaves.

Does God with diamond eyes look down on these
For the purposes of what intrinsic studies?

That Chance

That chance has being is a chance beautiful
Among fixities of rare machineries,
That chance may propose a system like a sphere
Curving, because thus curves the tear

Under the eyelids of the dead. Chance is so cold
Passing beyond the immediately perceived
Where fall not the green leaves
Or if they fall, they fall on glacial seas.

And chance is cold, O, as that autumnal Elijah in whirlwind,
Greybeard whom dimly apprehended starlings
See, mazed by the anti-Newtonian
Departure from the principle of the thin-webbed falling

Parachutists like seraphim systematized.

Statistics prove nothing of him or these,
For he was that departure in the wind
And the unfading love of man
Whose chance is but the chance always of him.

Cloud, cloud is fringed upon the factual all
And who shall prove, unverified? For by what white swan
Who shall fix certainty that all swans are white,
One black swan cloudlighted making the difference between
All and its negation, a black swan in wind,

A black swan, for instance? There is no absolute,

There is no complete probable
But deviation from the law
In lonely items of the real.

The Process

O, could clock hands be moved in either way
And process seem, as it should be simply, reversible,
Yet would we mistrust that Lazarus of octupus and sea-
Lilies evolving then toward mute infantile

O, woeful then in the sea! nor aged fox's cracked microcosm
Of the golden grapes upon the golden bough,
For there would be no retardation of that early theme
Wherein he questioned the validity of all

And when clouded leopards leap, leap and love
How woeful then, the ever brightening eye
Could God and ourselves as functioning retrieve;
For all our deaths would be our first birthday,

Ourselves, and the moose, and lotus buds in that cold,
dark river,
Ourselves, and the ermine whitening in the white snow
Hastening harrowed. How woeful then, the bright
electric hairs
And the vacancy of every brow,

For when toward the seed ovule would recede each green tree
And yesterday would be today, for all our sakes,
Yet would we persist in elegy,
Lament each one the rosebud of his lip,

The womb as tomb, and foetus coiled no more to flower,
And the annihilation of our strange sorrowing
When that tomorrow of a never doubted hour
Is time before the first angel falling.

How wasted then, the flesh made rounded and firm
And winging toward childhood, every snow-greaved swan
Till brief as snow in summer
Swan there's none

Nor timeless brightness ours; for carried to a just terminus
That reason seems an ever tolling bell;
And this, the loud tumult of the whirling geese,
And our mischance may yet be possible.

KENNETH BURKE:

The Problem of the Intrinsic

(*as reflected in the Neo-Aristotelian School*)

For some time I have been concerned with a Grammar of Motives constructed about the five terms Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose as a generating principle, and designed to demonstrate the value of a "dramatistic" perspective for the placing of cultural forms. But from private correspondence with John Crowe Ransom, I had an opportunity to see that a lyrist might distrust "dramatism" in advance, at least as applied to the analysis of lyric poetry. So, to prove my contentions by example, I made a dramatist analysis of two typical lyrics: Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn" and Wordsworth's sonnet "On Westminster Bridge."

Shortly after, The University Review *published three essays by the "Neo-Aristotelians," R. S. Crane, Norman Maclean, and Elder Olson. Mr. Maclean selects for analysis a Wordsworth sonnet having much the same quality of hush and arrest as the one I consider; Mr. Olson's choice is one of the Yeats "Byzantium" poems, as markedly developmental as the Keats "Ode." And Mr. Crane has chosen to place the whole exhibit expressly in dialectical opposition to such critics as Mr. Ransom, whom rightly or wrongly he calls "Coleridgean" (a bad word, within the conditions of the essays).*

I think this group of essays is the most important event in literary criticism that has occurred in quite a while. And I hope this discussion will at least induce more readers to look them up. Yet, ironically, I would welcome them mainly for a quality they lay no claim to possess: their "dramatism" (Aristotle's vocabulary of motives being so essentially dramatic that he even treats of the physical world in terms of "action" and "passion"). Mr. Crane would probably consider this a "Coleridgean" kind of appreciation. Yet I persist, even contending that the articles would have profited by an explicit recognition of their "dramatist" terminology. For I hold that the nature of the writers' terminology had an important effect upon the nature of the observations derived from it.

My task here is to discuss the essays without requiring more knowledge of my Grammar than I can here convey in passing. Thus I have had to begin in a somewhat roundabout fashion, in order to give the "problem of the intrinsic" a different placement than the one it gets in the three essays.

I

There is a *rhetorical* explanation for doctrines proclaiming the eternity of art. We can say that, esthetic standards being transitory, men try to compensate for this changefulness by denying its existence. Then we might fill out this explanation on the rhetorical level by sociological considerations, noting for instance that the doctrine would fit well with a collector's or antiquarian's attitude towards art, and thus with the business of selling art objects to customers in search of sound esthetic investments. And when art is approached from the antiquarian point of view, men may ask so little of it that it can easily meet the requirements. Thus

a work that, in its original context, might have seemed "terrifying" or "divine," could at least remain eternally "interesting" or "odd," thereby possessing a kind of permanence as tested by dilettantish criteria. Much esthetic theory stressing the appreciation of "form" would doubtless fall under this head.

Or noting how much of art has been a secularized variant of religious processes, particularly since the rise of the romantic reaction against capitalism and technology, we may offer a *symbolical* interpretation. A doctrine proclaiming the eternity of art would, from the symbolic point of view, be the natural secular analogue of a belief in the eternity of God.

But we may discuss motives on three levels. Besides Rhetoric and Symbolic, there is Grammar. We are on the grammatical level when we begin with the "problem of the intrinsic," as reflected in the attempt to characterize the substance of a work. We are faced with *grammatical* problems when we would consider a given work of art "in itself," in what I believe the scholastics might have called its *aseitas,* or "by-itselfness." Considered "intrinsically," the work is said to embody certain "principles." And these principles are said to reside in the division of the work into its parts, and in the relation of these parts to one another and to the whole.

Even though a work of art were to last but a few moments, being destroyed almost immediately after its production, during its brief physical duration you might deal with it *sub specie aeternitatis,* in terms of timelessness. This you could do by considering solely the relation of its parts to one another and to the whole. And you would thereby be thinking in terms of the "eternal" or "timeless" since the relations prevailing among the parts just are. Each part *is* in a certain relation to the others; and all the parts *are* in certain relations to the whole. You would thus be concerned with a work in terms of its *being*—and being is by definition an "eternal now." (Recall that the Aristotelian word for substance is *ousia,* being. Anything capable of consideration by itself, *kath auto,* would be a substance in this sense: as a man, a tree, a stone.) "Beings" may come and go; but insofar as you treat of something in terms of its *being* (in contrast, for instance, with treatment of it in terms of its genesis), by the sheer technicality of the treatment you are working in terms of the eternal—outside the category of time. (It may possess a kind of "internal time," in the sense that, if it is a work of literature or music, some of its parts may precede others. But such order can be discussed in terms of purely structural relationships. And time in this sense is not the kind of time we have in mind when we consider the work in terms of personality, or class, or epoch, etc.)

In sum, when you consider a thing just as it *is,* with the *being* of one part involved in the *being* of its other parts, and with all the parts derived from the being of the whole considered as a generating principle, there is nothing but a "present tense" involved here, or better, a "tenselessness," even though the thing thus dealt with arises in time and passes with time.

In Aristotle, such a concept of substance or being (*ousia*) was carried

to its full metaphysical limits. For he abided by the logic of his terminolog to the extent of concluding that the world itself was not created, but wa eternal. Every vocabulary has its limits, imposed by the internal logic o its terms; and Aristotle, as a superior thinker, carried his own vocabular to its limits. And though individual beings came and went, he held tha their *genera* (their family identities that contain the principles of thei being, as the principles of an equilateral triangle reside in the class of suc triangles) had existed and would exist forever.

But, though in Aristotle every individual stone or tree or man, or an other thing capable of treatment as a separate entity, was a being, I thin we should be wrong in saying that he treated beings simply in terms o their *individuality*. Rather, he located an individual thing's principle o being in its identity as a member of a *tribe* (his word *genos*, or genus, bein originally a word of strong familistic connotations, with the same root a our words "generate" and "generation"). It was the types, or kinds, o classes, or families of natural beings that continued permanently. Hence the intrinsic principles of a being were not unique, but were variations o principles common to the whole family, or genus, of such beings. The in ternal principle of motivation, the "entelechy" (or "that which contains it own aim") was the incentive of the thing to attain the kind of perfectio proper to the kind of thing it was (a stone's kind of perfection thus bein quite different from a tree's, or a man's).

Aquinas in his borrowing from Aristotle retained the Aristotelia stress upon being. But the Christian acceptance of Genesis made it im possible for Aquinas to retain the ultimate implications of this key term For him, as a Christian, the most important fact about the nature of th world was that we might call a *genetic*, or "historical," or "temporal," fact: its derivation from a divine Creator. Thus the *substance* of thing was determined not solely by their nature as beings in themselves; it als involved their place, or grounding, as *creatures* of God in a *creation* o God. And by giving the Aristotelian concept of the genus this "ancestral emphasis, he engrafted an "extrinsic" principle of substance. Men's abi ities and habits were said to be "intrinsic" principles of action—the "ex trinsic" motives were God and the Devil.[1]

Spinoza, taking the Aristotelian notion that a being, or substance is to be considered "in itself" (*id quod per se concipitur*), went on to ob serve that nothing less than the totality of all that exists can meet this re

1. You will note the beginning of an ambiguity here. For an ancestral God is no wholly "extrinsic." A creature who was descended from God and whose substance wa grounded in the creative act of God would somehow bear this qualification "within." Th logical completion of such thinking, however, would lead to pantheism, as the substance c God would be "within" his creation—and in Aquinas God is expressly classed as an "ex trinsic" principle of motivation. From the sociological point of view, we may note that i proportion as the notion of an "extrinsic" God attained its institutional counterpart in th formalistic externalization of religion, the Protestant pietistic stress upon God as a princip "from within" came by reaction to the fore. And at the time when this change was takin place, the meanings of two very strategic terms in philosophy changed places. The term "subjective" and "objective" (bearing upon the "inner" and the "outer") reversed their mean ings; medieval philosophers had called the "objective" what modern philosophers call "sub jective" and vice versa.

quirement. For any single object in the universe must be "defined" (limited, determined, negated) by the things that surround it. Only when considering the universe as a whole, and in considering the principles of the relations of the universe's parts to this universal whole, would we really be dealing with an "intrinsic" motivation. And when dealing with such individual things as a tree, a man, a stone (which are merely *parts* of the universe), we should have to consider their nature as grounded in a wider context, rather than simply as individuals embodying principles of their own. As Locke was to point out later, though we use the word "substance" to designate properties within a thing, etymologically the word means that which supports or grounds a thing (in brief, not something *inside* it but something *outside* it.) And when the most "intrinsic" statement we can make about a thing is a statement not about it in itself but about its place as part of the whole world, have we not just about reversed the meanings of the words "intrinsic" and "extrinsic"?

Paradoxically, the Spinozistic advice to see things *sub specie aeternitatis* was really a splendid introduction into philosophies that would see things in the terms of history. Spinoza, to be sure, considered the universe in terms of *being*; he proposed to treat of the parts in terms of this eternal whole; and when considering *historical* sequence, he proposed to consider it in terms of *logical* sequence (here using one of the profoundest puns in all thought, as one event in history is said to "follow" another the way the conclusion of a syllogism "follows" from the premises). But to treat individuals in terms of a much more inclusive whole is certainly not to consider them "eternally" in the Aristotelian sense, which required that they be treated "in themselves." As soon as you begin treating things in terms of a surrounding context (and a naturalistic context at that) you have laid the way for their treatment temporally, in terms of history. At every important point in Spinoza's doctrines, he had a compensation for such a movement. His history was equated with a timeless logic; his nature was equated with God. But when you equate two terms, either can replace the other, which is to say that the equating of two terms prepares the way for eliminating one of them. Hence, Spinoza's equating of naturalistic history and pantheistic being could be developed into a doctrine of naturalistic history pure and simple by merely dropping the theological side of the equation.[2] (Spinoza himself made seminal contributions to the study of religion from the *historicist* point of view.)

In proportion as theological geneticism developed into a purely secular historicism, the notion of a thing's intrinsic substance dissolved into the out-and-out extrinsic, until now many philosophers of science would formally abolish the category of substance. Aquinas had balanced intrinsic and extrinsic motivations by saying that, though God moved all beings, he moved each according to its nature. But modern science is *par excel-*

2. Another of these strategic ambiguities is to be seen in Berkeley's equating of the intelligible and the sensible. This could lead a philosophic movement out of rationalism into empiricism, by stressing the "sensible" side of the equation.

lence the approach "from without" (the "scenic," "environmentalist," c "situational" approach). It is interested not in what men "are," for in stance, "in themselves," but in what respects men are to be treated a animals, in what respects they are to be treated as vegetables, in what re spects as minerals, as electro-physical impulses capable of conditionin by material manipulations, as creatures of food, or climate, or geography etc. Thus, typically, the papers recently reported of a "gerontologist" wh was making investigations designed to increase longevity by increasing th "intrinsic resistance" of the body to the processes that make for old age and he proposed to do this by dosage of the body with various sorts c chemicals. We are not in a position to know what are his chances of suc cess. But we may raise doubts about his terms. Could such extrinsic agen cies as chemical dosage properly be expected to *increase* the body's in trinsic resistance? Insofar as it was effective, wouldn't it rather gain it effects by *decreasing* intrinsic resistance (somewhat as we keep warm "scientifically" not by methods that increase our intrinsic resistance t cold, but by improved modes of heating that decrease our resistance t cold).

Indeed, the question as to what a thing is "in itself" is not a scientifi question at all (in the purely empiricist sense of the term science), but philosophical or metaphysical one. Recently, for instance, there appeare a very intelligent book by a contemporary psychiatrist, Dr. Andras Angya entitled *Foundations for a Science of Personality.* But opening it, one find the entire first half of this project for a "science" of personality con structed about the relationships between "organism" and "environment," two terms that in their very nature *dissolve* the concept of personality b *reducing* it to non-personal terms. Strictly speaking, the expression "sc ence of personality" is a contradiction in terms, a "perspective by incon gruity." For "personality" (derived from a word referring to a mas role) is a "dramatist" concept, and as such involves philosophical c metaphysical notions of human identity. But a "science" of personalit would be evolved by translating matters of personality into terms wholl outside the personal (as the biologistic terms "organism" and "environ ment" are outside the personal). I do not say that there cannot be a "sc ence" of the personality, for Dr. Angyal's valuable book goes a long wa towards showing that there can be. (Or at least it shows that there ca be a "scientific terminology" of the personality). I am trying simply t suggest that such a science will be totally "extrinsic" in its approach, nc aiming to consider the philosophic problem of what the personality is "i itself," but perfectly at home in a vocabulary that simply dissolves th person into a non-person.

II

One will quickly realize why we wanted to approach the three essay thus circuitously as we turn now to Mr. Crane's "Prefatory Note," buil about his opposition to the method he calls "Coleridgean." In the Co

eridgean method, Mr. Crane says, one begins by expounding some general philosophic or metaphysical or psychological frame. Next one treats poetry in general as a representative aspect of this frame. And finally one treats specific poems as individual instances of vessels of poetry. The Coleridgean critic thus employs what we might call a process of narrowing-down. For he begins with the terms that apply to much broader fields of reference than to poetry alone; these are paired with contrary terms (such as "subjective and objective," or "extension and intension"); then other terms, more specific in reference, are added (I think Mr. Ransom's "structure and texture" pair would be an example); and this process is repeated "until, by a series of descending proportions, a transition is effected between the universality of the 'principles' and the particularity of the texts."

The poem would thus not be explained in itself, but "as a kind of emblem or exemplar of principles broader in their relevance than poems or any given kind of poems." The conclusions of such inquiry could be related to the texts "only as universal forms or platonic ideas are related to the particulars in the world which are their more or less adequate reflection." There might even be no need to consider the poem as a whole, since representative passages or lines can be also treated as vessels of the abstract qualities which the critic would discover in the particular work. Hence, "Coleridgean" critics are given to talk about "poetry" rather than about "poems"—and they may like to cite passages that can serve as "touchstones" of the qualities they would select as "poetic."

Messrs. Maclean and Olson, on the other hand, "represent a radical departure" from this tradition:

> They are interested in lyrics not as exemplars but as objects; they insist on approaching them as poems of a distinctive kind rather than as receptacles of poetry. . . . The appreciation they wish to make possible is one of which the object is not a universal form or value reflected in the poem but the poem itself in its wholeness and particularly as a structure of mutually appropriate parts.

To attain this "theoretical grasp of the parts of lyrics and of the principles of their unification," Mr. Crane says, we must confine ourselves to "an inductive study of lyrics pursued apart from any a priori assumptions about the nature of poetry in general." And after many more such essays, on many more poems, we may begin to see "what an inductive poetics of the lyric is likely to be." It is a necessary part of Mr. Crane's position, taken in dialectical opposition to the "Coleridgean," that he adopt this excessive stress upon the *inductive*.

If you consider philosophic or critical terminologies as languages, however (languages from which we derive kinds of observation in accordance with the nature of the terms featured in the given philosophic idiom), you find reason to question his claims in advance. For the critic does not by any means begin his observations "from scratch," but has a more or less systematically organized set of terms by which to distinguish and characterize the elements of the poem he would observe. In this sense, one's

observations will not be purely "inductive," even though they derive im portant modifications from the observing of the given poem. They wil also in part (and in particular as to their grammar, or form) be deduce or derived from the nature of the language or terminology which the criti employs. Such languages are developed prior to the individual observatio (though one may adopt the well known philosophic subterfuge: "Le us begin simply by considering this object in front of us, just as it is").

If there were only some few "true" things to be said about a poem' structure, and if men of various sorts readily made these same observa tions independently of one another, one might be justified in considerin these observations a matter of "induction." But since so many valid thing are to be said, a given vocabulary coaches us to look for certain kinds o things rather than others—and this coaching of observations is a deduct ive process, insofar as one approaches the poem with a well-formed analyti terminology prior to the given analysis, and derives observations from th nature of this terminology. Hypothetically, one might be perceptive o imaginative enough to transcend any vocabulary, as one might hypothetic ally add enough "epicycles" and other qualifications to the Ptolemaic syste of astronomy to make it do the work now done by the modern system o astro-physics. But under conditions of ordinary experience, such a tran scending of vocabulary is decidedly limited. Ordinarily, we see somewha beyond the limits of our favorite terms—but the bulk of our critical per ceptions are but particular applications of these terms. The terms are lik "principles," and the particular observations are like the judicial casuistr involved in the application of principles to cases that are always in som respects unique.

Some terminologies contain much richer modes of observation tha others. And the "dramatist" nature of the Aristotelian vocabulary coul be expected to provide the observer with very rich modes indeed. But on cannot be purely "inductive" in his observation of poems when makin these observations through the instrumentality of so highly developed philosophic language. One owes too much to the language. However, i Mr. Crane admitted that his "inductive" method also contained strongl "deductive" elements, he would have to relinquish the symmetry of hi own dramatizing, got by pitting his position in dialectical opposition t the "Coleridgean" mode of derivation. Indeed, when viewed in a linguistic or terministic, perspective (the perspective in which we would conside "dramatism"), the apparent distinctness between "inductive" and "de ductive" modes of observation and derivation here ceases to exist. Indeed insofar as the writers do abide by their pretensions, and begin with each analysis anew, their interpretation of the principles by which a give poem is organized is mere "prophecy after the event," which is not a very exacting kind of "induction." Induction must also use generalization which, in effect, prophesy *before* the event. It should not be merely a casuistry ready to rationalize any case after the case has occurred (a temp tation to which Aristotelianism has been prone in the past). It must also

risk statements as to *what to expect,* and *why.* Otherwise, such criticism becomes merely a disguised variant of impressionism, a kind of improvisation wherein the critic simply translates the unique imaginative sequence of the poem into a correspondingly unique conceptual equivalent.

III

As for the two long analytic essays by Messrs. Maclean and Olson, I should have to quote or paraphrase nearly every paragraph to convey how ably and discerningly they carry out their project. But as one cannot do justice to a poem in paraphrase, but must follow it from line to line, and from word to word, in its unique order, so these exegetes analyze their poems with a particularity that must be read in its particularity to be appreciated. However, in the course of their analysis, they make generalizations about their method and their conclusions—and we can consider these.

Mr. Maclean takes as his opponent specifically a critic who had based his discussion of a Wordsworth sonnet upon a theory about its reference to the poet's illegitimate daughter. Against this somewhat sorry position, Mr. Maclean says of his own:

> As the unity of a poem arises from the facts that it is divisible into parts and that these parts are harmoniously related, so the obligations resting upon this kind of criticism are twofold: to discover the parts of a poem and to render an account of their relationships.

He convincingly divides the sonnet into three parts, and considers their relation to the whole, in producing a "spiritual and religious translation of the evening." And he does well in making us realize the steps by which this translation progresses, as in his remarks on "the completeness with which the beauty and serenity of the Nun have been transferred to the immensity of the evening."[3]

At this point I must introduce some reference to the line of thought developed in my Grammar. In my analysis of the drama, I try to show how the quality of the scene contains the quality of the act that is enacted on that scene. (Most obvious example: the Shakespearean use of storm

3. I quote the sonnet herewith:

> It is a beauteous evening, calm and free,
> The holy time is quiet as a Nun
> Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
> Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
> The gentleness of heaven broods o'er the Sea:
> Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
> And doth with his eternal motion make
> A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
> Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
> If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
> Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
> Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
> And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
> God being with thee when we know it not.

or darkness as setting for a sinister bit of action. Hardy's use of background as a source of motivation is an obvious instance of this scene-act ratio in the novel). This is a "grammatical" principle of much wider application than the drama (hence, open to Mr. Crane's charge of "Coleridgean"). For in the various mythological, theological, metaphysical, and scientific theories of motivation the character we attribute to human action changes according to the character we attribute to the universal scene in which human acts take place. (Contrast, for instance the quality of human acts when placed against a background of struggles among the gods, and the quality of human acts in a behaviorist's background of mechanism and reflexes). In considering the lyric, where there is no action, but where there may be reference to persons (agents), we find that this same relationship may apply between scene and agent. Indeed, it is this scene-agent identification that makes it possible for the poet to convey states of mind (psychological processes) by the use of corresponding scenic imagery. "Dramatistically," therefore, one is invited to observe that this particular sonnet is constructed quite neatly about this scene–agent ratio. The octave establishes the quality of the scene; then at the beginning of the sestet, we turn to the agent ("Dear Child! dear Girl!"); and we find the quality of the agent so imbued with the divine quality of the scene containing this agent, that she can possess this quality even without knowing it, by the simple fact of having it as her ground.

Also, I would hold that a "dramatistic" placement of the lyric is to be arrived at "deductively" in this sense: one approaches the lyric from the category of *action,* which Aristotle considers the primary element of the drama. And then by dialectic coaching one looks for a form that will have as its primary element the moment of *stasis,* or *rest.* We are admonished, however, to note that there are two concepts of "rest," often confused because we may apply the same word to both. There is rest as the sheer cessation of motion (in the sense that a rolling ball comes to rest); and there is rest as the end of action (end as finish or end as aim), the kind of rest that Aristotle conceived as the *primum mobile* of the world, the ground of motion and action both. It is proper for the physical sciences, we would grant, to treat experience non-dramatically, in terms of motion, but things in the realm of the social or human require treatment in terms of action or drama. Or rather, though things in the realm of the human *may* be treated in terms of motion, the result will not be statements about the intrinsic, but about the extrinsic (as per our remarks on an "incongruous" science of the personality).

A treatment of the lyric in terms of action would not by any means require us merely to look for analogies from the drama. On the contrary, the *state of arrest* in which we would situate the essence of the lyric is not analogous to dramatic action at all, but is the dialectical counterpart of action. Consider as an illustration the fourteen Stations of the Cross: The concern with them in the totality of their progression would be dramatic. But the pause at any one of them, and the contemplation and deep-

ening appreciation of its poignancy, in itself, would be lyric.

A typical Wordsworthian sonnet brings out this methodological aspect of the lyric (its special aptitude for conveying a *state* of mind, for erecting a moment into a universe) by selecting such themes as in themselves explicitly refer to the arrest, the pause, the hush. However, this lyric state is to be understood in terms of action, inasmuch as it is to be understood as a state that sums up an action in the form of an attitude.

Thus approached, an attitude is ambiguous in this sense: It may be either an incipient act or the substitute for an act. An attitude of sympathy is incipiently an act, for instance, in that it is the proper emotional preparation for a sympathetic act; or it may be the substitute for an act in that the sympathetic person can let the intent do service for the deed (precisely through doing nothing, one may feel more sympathetic than the person whose mood may be partially distracted by the conditions of action). In either case, an attitude is a state of emotion, or a moment of stasis, in which an act is arrested, summed up, made permanent and total, as with the Grecian Urn which in its summational quality Keats calls a "fair Attitude."[4]

We have here a cluster of closely related words: action, rest (designated in the sonnet by such synonyms as "calm," "quiet," "tranquillity," "gentleness"), motion, attitude or potential action. Mr. Maclean says something much to our purposes here, in his gloss on the word "free" in the first line: "It is a strange word when coupled with 'beauteous' and 'calm.' As endowing the evening with the power to act, it seems at variance with the beauty of tranquillity." The comment enables us to discern that in "free" we find obliquely a reference to potential action. However, our thoughts on the relation between action and the rest that is the end of action would lead us to hold that there is nothing "strange" about this usage. Who would be more "tranquil" than the wholly "free?" For his complete freedom would so thoroughly contain the potentialities of action that there would be no problem to disturb the state of rest.

Nearly every particular observation that Mr. Maclean makes about the sonnet, I could salute and zestfully, if he but gave it the pointedness that would derive from an explicit recognition of the "dramatistic" element in his vocabulary. Thus I would hold that an explicit concern with the scene-agent ratio provides a central statement about the grammatical principles involved in the structure of the poem. Or Mr. Maclean cites a passage from "Lines Composed Above Tintern Abbey":

> . . . that serene and blessed mood
> In which the affectations gently lead us on,—
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:

4. Wordsworth's formula, "emotion recollected in tranquillity," could be translated into our terms as "a state of emotion conveyed as a moment of stasis."

> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.

And here by the use of an explicitly dramatist perspective we would distinguish between a level of bodily motion ("the motion of our human blood") and a level of mental or spiritual action ("a living soul"). The "power of harmony" here would be another synonym for the rest of "potential action." And the state of arrest is said to be attained when the level of mental action transcends the level of bodily motion. (The "Ode to a Grecian Urn" is constructed about a similar transcendence. Progressively through the stanzas we can watch the poet's fever split into two parts: a bodily passion and a mental action. But in the "Ode" it is a state of agitation that is arrested, to be transformed into its transcendent counterpart).

IV

It is to be regretted that none of these three writers, in stressing the importance of an analysis which considers the relations of parts to whole, makes any mention of the fact that in Aristotle's treatment of tragedy there are *two* versions of this relationship. In Chapter 6, Aristotle writes:

> There are six parts consequently of every tragedy, as a whole (that is) of such or such quality, *viz.* a Fable or Plot, Characters, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, and Melody.

But in Chapter 12, he writes:

> The parts of Tragedy to be treated as formative elements in the whole were mentioned in a previous Chapter. From the point of view, however, of its quantity, i. e., the separate sections into which it is divided, a tragedy has the following parts: Prologue, Episode, Exode, and a choral portion, distinguished into Parode and Stasimon.

In any event, it is notable that both these treatments of part-whole relationships apply not only to single tragedies but to tragedies as a *class*. Yet Mr. Maclean says, in conclusion to his article: "To explain the poem . . . in terms of its particular beginning is to explain as exactly as possible its uniqueness, and to distinguish it from other poems by Wordsworth that treat much the same 'theme.'" And likewise Mr. Olson will end his article on a similar remark to the effect that "great art . . . is always in the last analysis *sui generis*." There is, of course, a sense in which every work is unique, since its particular combination of details is never repeated. But is the emphasis upon this fact feasible if one would develop an "Aristotelian" poetics of the lyric, treating lyrics as a class? And a mere concern with one lyric, then another lyric, then another would not yield the kind of observations needed to treat of lyrics as a class. For to treat lyrics as a class, one must examine individual lyrics from the standpoint of their generic attributes. And to do this, one must have terminological prepossessions, prior to the analysis, even before one can select a poem that he

considers representative of the lyric. At least, one must have negative or tentative touchstones that enable him roughly to differentiate lyrics as a class from such classes as epic, drama, epigram, etc.

One does not place a form in isolation. The placement of a given form involves the corresponding placement of other forms. Thus *a vocabulary wider in reference than the orbit of the given form is needed for the classifying of that form.* Though the authors would presumably get immunity from such objections by presenting their analyses as mere *preparations* for a poetics of the lyric, we would object that observations confined in their reference to the unique are not classificatory at all.[5]

The point is made still clearer by considering another citation from Mr. Olson:

> The scrutiny of particular poems would thus be the beginning of the critical enterprise; but the principles eventually reached, as disclosed by analysis, would not be rules governing the operations involved in the construction of any further poem, nor would the enumeration of poetic parts and poetic devices suffer extension beyond those objects to which analysis had been turned. . . . Poetic questions would be concerning the poetic structure of a particular work . . . [and] would terminate in a discovery of the parts of a work and of the interrelations through which the parts are parts of a whole.

Now, if the principles of a specific work were so defined that the definition would not apply to "any further poem," would not this also mean that the definition would not apply to any *other* poem? In brief, would not this conception of the relation between parts and whole be so particularized as to make statements about the lyric as a *genus* impossible? And could a critic, aiming at analyses that meet these particularized requirements, go beyond the merely statistical to the generic unless at the same time he happened to be taking some other kind of step not expressly signalized? Surely it is ironic to find Aristotle, who was so long admired and resented as the Prince of Deducers, now serving as Prince of Inducers.

As a matter of fact, there are many passages in Mr. Olson's essay where he profits by going beyond his principle of uniqueness. For he launches into generalizations about the lyric generically that are not at all confined to the particular poem he is analyzing (Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium," of which by the way he makes what I think is a really superb analysis). These place the lyric as a class with relation to other

5. Mr. Crane reminds us of Coleridge's distinction between "poetry" and "poem," in the *Biographia Literaria.* But perhaps he and his colleagues have been victimized by the "Coleridgean" here: perhaps the distinction between "poetry" and "poem" is not enough. "Poetry" itself may have two different meanings. We may use it as one member of such dialectical pairs as "poetry and science," "poetry and mathematics," "poetry and anarchism," "poetry and politics," "poetry and morals," etc. Or we may use it as a term for poems in a *generic* sense (as Aristotle in his *Poetics* treats of part-whole relationships not by treating of tragedies one by one, in their uniqueness, but generically). So we may need three terms rather than two here: a term for "poetry" (as member of a dialectical pair), and a term for "poem" (this poem, that poem, the next poem), and a term for "poems" (as a class, with corresponding terms for classes and sub-classes).

classes. When he says, for instance, that tragedy, epic, and comedy are "dynamic, for they imitate change," whereas "the kind we have been scrutinizing is static," his concern here with stasis profits by dramatistic reference.

His discussion of the poem itself is thoroughly dramatistic in its choice of vocabulary, being built about distinctions between "action" and "passion," explicitly recognizing the theme as a problem of "regeneration," and treating the whole series of transformations from stanza to stanza as a "dialectic" wherein character is determined "not by its share in an action but by its role in a drama, not of action, but of thought." Yet, surprisingly, this highly developed vocabulary is employed quite as though it had been forced upon the critic purely by inspection of the given poem—and we are warned against an attempt to find in the lyric "some analogue of plot in the drama and epic." However, imagery, like attitude, has the quality of "incipient action"—and in noting how, in a given poem, it undergoes a series of developments from ambiguous potentiality to clear fulfilment, we should be considering it "dramatistically" without thereby treating it merely as the analogue of dramatic plot.

And let us cite two other statements that are thoroughly *generic*, and as such are derived not from mere observation of the single poem but from the nature of the "dramatist" vocabulary:

> There can be no plot because there can be no incidents; the "events" in a lyric poem are never incidents as such, connected by necessity or probability, but devices for making poetic statements. . . .
>
> Since there is no action, there is no agent, that is, *character*, in the sense in which there are differentiated agents in the drama; rather, the character in the sense in which character may be said to exist here is almost completely universalized. . . ."[6]

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6. "Universalized" is a good word here. The poetic "I" that is the ground of a lyric fills the whole universe of discourse.

Mr. Olson's distinction between the dramatic "act" and the lyric "event" opens up interesting possibilities. In the *Philosophy of Literary Form* I had used a similar distinction, but with a quite different application. But by combining Mr. Olson's application with my own, I believe I come a bit closer to glimpsing why the lyric is a better fit with the scientific than the dramatic is. The steps are as follows (first quoting from my summary of the dramatistic perspective, op. cit.):

> We have the drama and the scene of the drama. The drama is enacted against a background. . . . The description of the scene is the role of the physical sciences; the description of the drama is the role of the social sciences. . . . The physical sciences are a calculus of events; the social sciences are a calculus of acts. And human affairs being dramatic, the discussion of human affairs becomes dramatic criticism, with more to be learned from study of tropes than from a study of tropisms. . . . The error of the social sciences has usually resided in the attempt to appropriate the scenic calculus for a charting of the act.

Now science, as we have observed in the present paper, is "scenic." And since it speaks in terms of motion rather than in terms of action, the typical scientific vocabulary is non-dramatic.

Recall next Yvor Winters' notion of "Pseudo-Reference," one kind of which is "reference to a non-existent plot." As an instance of "pseudo-reference," he cites from "Gerontion":

KAY BOYLE:

Cairo Street

They looked out of place in this section of Paris, perhaps members of a motion-picture company who had lost their stars and wandered in out of the sudden springtime heat for a glass of beer while they waited for time or circumstances to absolve them; the one who wore neat dark blue and a hat with a shape to it the director's secretary, it might be, and the big soft man in the checked wool jacket the director himself, thick-shouldered, bald, art-bitten, his heavy thighs clasped fast by chestnut-colored velvet trousers, the sallow oriental hand holding the glass, and the loose dark underlip funnelling beneath the rim as he drank. The one dressed up like an English soldier, sitting with his chair tipped back into the corner of the café-tabac and a cigarette on his lip, might have been the young embittered author of the piece. His hair was crisp and wavy under the khaki cap, his brows faun-like, his cheeks hollow, and he might have been twenty-three-or-four but something like weariness or bitterness had marked him prematurely. Either he was soured by what they had done to his story in the filming or else too many nights of too hard drinking had given him the look of worn and desiccated melancholy he bore. His long thin legs in their battle-dress were stretched out under the marble-topped table on which the glasses of beer stood, and near his boots was the camera, or what looked as though it might be one, with the strap to sling it onto the shoulder hanging, and a case for carrying films beside it.

The first one, the little secretary, or clerk, or caterer to the great, was obviously French, but he spoke the language to them with a slight uneasiness in the voice and eyes (perhaps because the men he had sat down with were foreigners he had met only a quarter of an hour before, or perhaps because he was too small in stature ever to be at ease with men at all). He was saying:

"In the first six months of experimentation we exhausted war. I was with Tricolore Radio then and we went through the whole chromatic scale: first Madrid bombed, then Helsinki, ships foundering, submarines sucking to the bottom, whine of shells, scream of ambulances—all through the ear." He gave them a fleeting, uneasy smile before he said: "You people who work with the stage or the screen, it's all made simple for you, but on the air you have only the one organ of reception. Everything we deal with has to be reduced to its verbal delivery, sermon, peroration, locution—"

It was early afternoon and the café-tabac was empty of clients except for the three men sitting there with the glasses of beer before them, but because of the lorry traffic outside in Cairo Street it seemed a crowded, violently-animated place. From the boulevard Sebastopol came the big

"finished." That is, it is to be considered in terms of "perfection," as per the stressing of part-whole relationships. These men have done criticism a great service in helping to reaffirm this aspect of criticism, particularly at a time when the state of the sciences has offered so many extrinsic approaches to poetry, which can be considered as the "exemplar" of political exigencies, neurosis, physique, diet, climate, cultural movements, economic classifications, etc. But consideration of it as an act surviving as a constitution would also enable one to consider its intrinsic relations.

The dramatistic perspective, if I may refer to my *Philosophy of Literary Form,* points equally towards a concern with "internal structure" and towards a concern with "act-scene relationships." "Words are aspects of a much wider communicative context, most of which is not verbal at all. Yet words also have a nature peculiarly their own. And when discussing them as modes of action, we must consider *both* this nature as words in themselves *and* the nature they get from the non-verbal scenes that support their acts." But while proposing to consider words "as acts upon a scene," I held that the approach to literature in terms of "linguistic, or symbolic, or literary action" could avoid the excesses of the purely environmental schools "which are usually so eager to trace the relationships between act and scene that they neglect to trace the structure of the act itself."

The explicit treatment of the poem as an act, however, would remind us that it is not enough to consider it solely in terms of its "perfection," or "finishedness," since this conventionalized restriction of our inquiry could not possibly tell us all the important things about its substance. This seems to be particularly the case with the study of lyrics—for often, to grasp the full import of the terms employed in one poem, we must see how these terms are qualified by their use in other poems. That is, the individual lyrics are not to be considered solely as isolated acts, but also as stages or stations of a more comprehensive act. And statements about this more comprehensive act are also statements about the *intrinsic* nature of the enactment in the single poem. I began by speaking of the three fields: Grammar, Rhetoric, and Symbolic. It is perhaps only in the third of these categories that modern criticism has something vitally new to offer the student of literature. And it would be a pity indeed if a dogmatic or formalistic preference for an earlier method interfered with the progress of such inquiry, which promises greatly to increase our knowledge of poetic substance in particular and of human motivation in general. (Nor would it be the first time that the great name of Aristotle had served to stifle fresh inquiry.)

The concern with Symbolic has already been developed to a point where we can see that, as regards the analysis of literary texts at least, it can be more empirical in its methods than is possible to most studies in the human realm. Yet in trying to abide by the neo-Aristotelian ideals for the compartmentalizing of inquiry, one would simply be taking on many encumbrances that interfered with the development of methods proper to the nature of the subject-matter.

KAY BOYLE:

Cairo Street

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city noises, and here in the narrow one-way street the trucks braked, roared, backfired, crowding enormously and intimately past.

"All kinds of weathers were used up," the little Frenchman said, leaning closer across the table. His quick, cocky hand went out as if he were going to pick up his glass and drink, but instead he adjusted his cuff and went on talking. "Gales at sea, fog-horns, rockets of distress, high winds, blizzards, they've been done over and over. And take an aereoplane—aereoplanes are completely finished. You can't use a triple-motor throb now and hope to hold your public any more than you can get them on the edge of their seats with the sound of a galloping horse." He raised his voice above the increasing tumult of the lorries returning thicker and faster to their own district now to load up for the evening's get-away. "Put a mine disaster on the stage and you can add to your effect by smell—burn something in the wings. Or volumes of smoke pouring across the screen, but we're tied up tight, we can't rely on anything like that. We have to reach the ear," he said, "the blind, dumb, untutored ear, the universal and completely unaided ear—"

"What the devil do you think Ornstein can do about it?" the young man dressed as an English soldier said. He tipped his chair further back on its two legs in the corner, and lit another cigarette and threw the match away. He spoke French with an accent, his lip contorted with the shape and taste of the words as an Anglo-Saxon's is likely to be. Then he brought his chair forward on its four legs with a crack. "If you're trying to sell him something, it's no good. He's American. He has a radio already," he said.

He picked up his glass and drank, irritation sucking his cheeks thinner, the faun's brows twitching, the girlish, delicately-skinned throat swallowing the beer.

"Let him talk, O'Corey," said the big man, speaking English or any other language with soft-tongued, oriental inaccuracy. He leaned one arm in the brown-and-white checked sleeve on the marble and looked heavily, lingeringly at the little Frenchman's face, and then without turning his head away and without lifting his hand to his mouth he yawned. On one vulnerable wrist he wore a silver-linked bracelet. Sometime before he had taken his necktie off because of the heat and opened his yellow linen shirt at the neck. "Just let him go on," he said. "He's not so stupid." He looked at the clock over the door and yawned again. "We got three-quarters of an hour to kill. We might as well listen to him as sit doing nothing."

"I'm presenting the difficulties like this to give you an idea," the Frenchman went on, having understood nothing, not the words, nor the yawn across the beer, nor the impatience in the soldier's face. "I'm giving you the technical side of it," he said, "leaving the question of propaganda aside. We can give anti-German, anti-Russian, anti-Japanese propaganda until the time when television comes under international control. Then if Japanese bankers, for instance, have a big share of the stock, the propa-

ganda will alter. Last month I did 'Uncle Tome's Cabin' for Radio Moderne," he said, "and that struck a new note because of the dialect. We played up the blacks moaning in chorus and worked up to the climax of that scene where the dogs go after Uncle Tome across the ice."

"Eliza," said the young man called O'Corey. The lorry coming up Cairo Street braked loudly at the intersection, then shifted gears to take the climb. "It was Eliza they were after," O'Corey said, snarling it across the beer.

"No, Uncle Tome," said the Frenchman, smiling. Ornstein was leaning heavily, slumbrously on the table, his mouth open, looking without wonder, almost without interest at the Frenchman's face. "It had a certain novelty," he was saying, "but it didn't get us past the limits in dimension I was speaking of before. According to the results of our inquiry, sixty-three per cent of our known audience switched off when the horses came up the drive. You can't do horses' hoofs any more. People have had enough. That, and the kind of incident that took place a few months back when a whole crew went out one night in the woods to pick up the troating of a rutting stag, that's all a part of radio's past. We were six hours out there in the moonlight with the apparatus set up and the announcer telling thousands of listeners all over Europe that in another five minutes we were sure to get it. The police had thrown a cordon around the woods in a two-mile radius. The amplifiers were hanging in the branches of the trees, but those Don Juans didn't open their mouths all evening." He started to laugh, but meeting O'Corey's eyes he changed his mind. He waited until the three monstrous trucks had passed the corner, and then he went on saying: "That's why I consider this assignment a step backward as far as radio history is concerned. I'm to hop to Marseilles on a lorry tonight, eat in the Routiers' Restaurants with the drivers, get all the sounds right, and pick out my leading broadcaster on the way. If you tune in on Radio Moderne at 8:35 next Saturday night you'll get the sound-record of the trip I'm going to take this evening. But what I'm interested in," he said, leaning towards the man called Ornstein, "is something else. I'd like to give a sound-projection of an exhibition of paintings, for instance, striking a means between speech and vision that would communicate the painter's intention in the same way the original work of art does."

"O'Corey, he's not so bad," said Ornstein, and he took the folded silk handkerchief out of the top pocket of his checked jacket and wiped the moisture off his face and brow. "He's fecund, you know, he's fecund," he said, and he put his arms down on the table again and leaned on them, looking indolently at the little Frenchman on the other side. "He won't live long, he can't live long," said Ornstein, dreamily. "Somebody'll have to rub him out." He sat there looking at him as if at a specimen caught wild somewhere and put into a curved container, on view to mortals as he climbed up the sloping side, climbed up it over and over again and each

time did not quite make the edge but fell back to the center; watching him lift himself again and start climbing up the side again, clinging to absolutely nothing with his puny hands.

"As long as television belongs to the highest bidder and the bidding isn't closed yet," the Frenchman said, "I can't go in for that. But there's talk at the studio of a scale, perhaps in color or perhaps in a new musical notation, which is still to be perfected. If television were liberated, as it should be, like helium, we'd none of us have to pay entrance fees to museums, but until it is I'm looking for the way to broadcast the essence of a classical nativity by sound, and another to project to the ear a Dali painting, for instance—"

"It's half past three," said O'Corey, taking his cap off and flinging it down on the marble. "How long is this going to go on?"

Outside, in the other street, a brewery-lorry came to a halt by the curb and the driver, bare-armed and wearing a leather apron over his shirt and trousers, came in through the open door. He jerked his billed cap to the back of his head and said bon jour to the waiter standing behind the zinc and the three men at the table. Three lorries mounted the incline of Cairo Street, bearing their companies' names and their destinations printed on them, and on one the route mapped out with Paris at one end of the broad fair indicated avenue and Marseilles at the other, as single and simple as if no towns or landscapes lay between the two. The Frenchman's voice was lost in their thunder a moment, and the brewery-truck driver came and went: went carrying the empty kegs easily out from behind the counter, and came with his tough bare arms stretched down to the weight, carrying in the full. When he came for the fourth time through the door, O'Corey leaned back in his chair and raised his hands to his mouth and called out through the traffic's tumult.

"Your beer's rotten. Anybody ever told you that?"

The bit of dead cigarette on the truck driver's lip moved with his grin.

"German talk-water!" he called back across the café to the table, and O'Corey suddenly began laughing, the eye swift, eager as a bird's, and the thin belly jerking under his belt as he laughed.

"It isn't that television isn't perfected," the little Frenchman was saying. "It has to be tied up by patents before they can let it go. They say it's even possible for death to be directed by it. For example, by bringing into the vision of an ill or aged person, possibly a victim of a heart ailment, a speeding locomotive. There was a case I knew of in the same line of reasoning," he said, looking only at Ornstein now. "A man driving in a car with a friend, a nervous man who had been under treatment in a psychopathic clinic, and the car approached a railway crossing where the barriers were raised and it was clearly quite safe to cross. The driver of the car did not hesitate, drove onto the tracks, and there the nervous passenger gave a loud scream and seized his arm. 'The train's coming, the train's coming!' he shouted out, and he collapsed on the seat. There

was no train visible, and when they were clear of the crossing the driver stopped the car to revive his friend, and discovered he was dead. But here comes the interesting part," the Frenchman said, pausing for the effect. "The doctors later pronounced that he had not died of heart-failure but from bodily injuries—contusions and a broken back—"

The brewery-lorry driver was going out again with an empty keg hanging at arm's length before him, the yoked wood of the barrel riding against his apron's leather as he walked. His cap was on the back of his head off his sweat-matted hair, and his face was turned to look at O'Corey, his mouth laughing but no sound coming from it because of the clamor of trucks filing past. When he came back in again his hands were empty and he wiped his face with a dark blue rag and leaned on the zinc.

"Beer thins the blood, bloats the stomach, weakens the arteries, wears out the privy," he called across the café, and he picked up the glass of red wine the waiter had set beside him on the bar. He glanced at the window and door an instant, and then he raised his hand in a closed fist and shook it towards the three men in the corner in salutation before he drank. O'Corey brought his chair down hard on its four feet, and then he stood up, tall, slender, a little stooping in his khaki, and with one hand in his trouser's pocket he slouched across the cafe to the bar.

"Not mobilized?" he said, with his accent, standing beside the lorry driver, and the other man lifted the fingers of one hand and shook his head.

"Five children," he said. He stood drinking his wine and looking at the young man in the English uniform, looking at him over the glass with black, clear, merry eyes. O'Corey's narrow, haggard face was delicate as a woman's and his eyebrows twitched as he spoke.

"I'm leaving for Norway in twenty minutes," he said. "Have a drink on me before I go."

SEVEN MODERN FRENCH POETS

Translated by

CLARK MILLS

FRANCIS JAMMES:

Guadalupe de Alcaraz

Guadalupe de Alcaraz has golden mittens,
pomegranate flowers hanging from her ears
and two spit-curls, like two giant cedillas
glued flat against her virginal smooth brow.

Her eyes, dilated as if by some drug
(they say people used belladona formerly),
are passionate, astonished and curious,
and their black pupils roll in bluish-white.

She has a short, curved nose, like the beak of quail.
She is hard, golden, round as a pomegranate.
Her name is also Rosita-Marie,
but she calls her duenna: carogna!

All day long she nibbles chocolate,
or else she argues with her parakeet
in a garden in the valley of Almeria
full of blue scallions, pepper-plants and bee-hives.

When Guadalupe who is now seventeen
is eighty, she will go often
into the garden of pungent scents and sticky flowers
to play the guitar, in little gloves.

With a hooked nose and crooked chin, she will have then
the vague eyes of old children, the thin stoop,
and a gold chain with pendant emeralds
falling down stiffly from her vulture's neck.

With an immense rod, serving her as cane,
she will beat cats, children and flies.
Not wishing to answer, she will tighten her mouth.
She will have on her lip a pink moustache.

She will have in her room a virgin under glass
with white gloves, with silver on her dress.
This wax virgin will be her patroness,
that is, Our Lady of Guadalupe.

On the day of the death of Guadalupe de Alcaraz,
fat hidalgos who resemble parrots
will prey at her slender, parallel feet,
seeming to open and close their wings.

PAUL VALERY:

The Wasted Wine

One day I poured into the sea,
as an oblation to the void,
a few drops of a precious wine.
(Do not ask on what spot I stood.)

But who had wished that wine destroyed?
Perhaps a sybil prompted me?
Again, perhaps the wish was mine,
pouring the wine and seeing blood?

Faded, the rose the water wore!
The sea, transparent as before,
was soon the same as ever there . . .

lost wine, and water drunk on grapes! . . .
I saw into the bitter air
bound upward the profoundest shapes . . .

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE:

Rhenish Night

My glass is filled with wine that flickers like a flame
Now hear the boatman's measured song
That tells how in the moonlight seven women came
With footsteps lost in their green hair unbound and long

I do not wish to listen to that story
Sing louder songs and dance
And gather all the maidens clothed in glory
With golden tresses plaited and immobile glance

The night-gold shudders in the drunken Rhine
The voice climbs towards the summit and collapse of sound
The vine embraces the reflection of the vine
In the green hair and in the summer I am drowned

But like a burst of laughter my glass broke and spilled the wine

JEAN COCTEAU:

Spring at the Bottom of the Sea

The bottom of the sea has its own seasons. As on earth, spring is one of the most beautiful. The coral breaks into bud, and the sponges take deep breaths of the blue water. A forest of red stags listens to the sound of the sea. Sometimes an aviator falls from the skies of the sea. He falls slowly and rolls himself into the sand. The flowers sleep standing and there is a crowd of them that say goodbye. The armless fish collect on them. They give the sea big kisses. Because of the lighting and the background you would often think you were at the photographer's. A plume of globules chirps in the corner. It escapes from the little faucet that changes the salt water.

JULES ROMAINS:

The Four Ducks by the Lake of Come

One day some time ago there were
on the shore of the lake of Côme
four ducks that had sat down.

Legless from rump to gizzard
their stomachs hugged the sand.
From time to time the shallow waves
warmed to a turn by the sun
slid softly under their stomachs.

The four ducks blinked their eyes
with such unhurried satisfaction,
that the waves rose and lapped them as before;

and I who on the bank
stood with head in sun, and saw
that delighted flesh,
hastened to the inn to drink
a glass of red wine.

Another Soul Advances

But in what is the boulevard transfigured?
The passers-by appear almost no longer physical;
these are no longer movements, these are rhythms,
and I no longer need my eyes to see them.

The air breathed has a mental taste.
Men
resemble the ideas that brush a mind.
From them to me all things remain internal;
from their cheek to my cheek nothing is foreign,
and we are bound by space that thinks with us.

VALERY LARBAUD:

Ode

Lend me your tremendous noise, your great effortless speed,
your nocturnal glide across illuminated Europe,
O train de luxe! lend me the rending music
that sounds along your corridors of golden leather,
while behind lacquered doors with strong bronze latches
the millionaires are sleeping.

Humming a tune, I ramble through your corridors
and towards Vienna and towards Budapest I follow you,
adding my one voice to your hundred thousand voices,
O Harmonika-Zug!

For the first time in my life I knew the sweetness of life,
in a compartment of the Nord-Express, between Wirballen and Pskow.
We glided across prairies where, below great groups of trees like hills,
shepherds were dressed in raw, soiled sheepskin . . .
(Eight o'clock of an autumn morning, and the beautiful professional singer
with violet eyes was singing in the next compartment.)

And you, wide panes through which I saw Siberia and the Peaks of Samnium flow past,
bitter and flowerless Castille, and the sea of Marmora beneath warm rain!
Lend me, O Orient-Express, Sud-Brenner-Bahn, lend me
your wonderful dull sounds and
your vibrant e-string voices;
lend me the light, simple respiration
of the tall slender locomotives, so maneuverable,
the locomotives of the fast expresses,
that with no effort lead four yellow coaches named in gold
into the mountainous solitudes of Serbia
and farther, through rose-filled Bulgaria . . .

Ah! these sounds and this movement must
enter my poems and describe for me
my ineffable life, my life
like a child's who loves his ignorance, and hopes
for vague things endlessly and only.

ALAIN BOSQUET:

(from) *The Unpardonable Image*

We smother in the figure of our song,
and one day, on our avenue so limpid, we become
scarecrows of gravitation;
carniverous roses drink our marrow,
through foliage we change to acid marches,
and now, our feet leaden with earthy fins,
suddenly we are colder and crueler
than peoples given up to sleep;
we are powerful with allegory, but in vain,
for always we have been lacking in the simple grandeur
of the larch, able to live deep in itself,
water that flows in joy of movement,
azure as natural as its altitude,
a star lulled by its amicable frost,
or the plant, or the sky, or the sighing marble,
all common beings that, when we have named them,
at once open immense expanses to us.
Oh, I know, we have struck the lattices of the abyss,
and yet find only a forbidden gesture
in our flesh, now so tired of invention!
Who shall give back the soft air and the laughing palm,
the wicked salt, the pride, the stunned flocks?
And bring once more our natural smiles,
the first affection, the most gentle touch
in which we triumph over all our being
with a few scars that speak of childhood?

J. F. POWERS:

He Don't Plant Cotton

Baby walked the block to the carline rapidly or slowly, depending on his hunch whether a car was coming. On some nights it was pleasant waiting, not cold, and he leaned against a storefront and simply forgot about the car: it would be along. Other nights, the bitter nights, he fidgeted angrily, scraping his feet in the street, squinting down the lonesome tracks. The wind twisted snow into his eyes and he focussed his eyes down the line again and again and blinked away the cold tears.

The seasons entered the Black Belt penitently, in ashes, dust, and drabness, without benefit of green. Time here wore itself away monotonously, with a slow drag: there was always time left over. The seasons were not rounded. You knew them only by the thermometer and the clothing of the people. Still there were nights when the air itself told you. On some spring nights, even here, the air seemed enchanted, the diminished echo of spring happening ardently in the distant prairies and the suburbs. When the street was a decaying hollow mouth hung open, breathing fetid breath, that was summer. And tonight, certainly, was winter.

The snow, just beginning, swirled down, fighting for the earth. Baby twisted his hands to make heat in his overcoat pockets. He saw a woman cross the street to catch the car, which was coming now, but the woman refused stiffly to run for it. The wind went hooting down the tracks. Baby got on.

A cold breeze swept the floor, rattling old transfers and gum wrappers. Baby placed his feet uneasily on the heater to make the meagre warmth funnel up his pants legs. The dark flesh beneath the cloth was chilled to chalky grey at the joints. He listened to the wheels bump over segments in the track, and the warmth from the heater rose higher on his legs. Without knowing exactly when, he became warm and forgetful of the weather, except as scenery. The streets were paved evenly with snow twinkling soft and clean and white under the white streetlights and velvet red or green from the neon signs. New York may be all right, he hummed to himself, but Beale street's paved with gold. That's a lie, he thought. All my life playing jobs in Chicago and I still got to ride the Big Red. And that's no lie. Jobs for musicians were getting harder and harder to find. What they wanted was Mickey Mouse sound effects. Singing strings, electric guitars, neon violins. Hard to find a spot to play in and when you did it was always a white place and drunken advertising men who wanted to hear A Old Song—"My Wild Irish Rose" or "That Old Gang of Mine." So you played it, of course, plenty of schmaltz. And the college kids who wanted Swing—any slick popular song. So you played that too. And always you wanted to play the music you were born to,

blue or fast, music that had no name. You managed somehow to play that too when there was a lull, or the place was empty and you had to stay until four A. M. anyway.

Baby got off the streetcar and walked two blocks over snow, comfortable to the feet, the same two blocks he saw every night except Tuesday. The wind had died down almost entirely and the snow whirled in big flakes end-over-end and coasting slow motion. The wind managed only to stir up little whirls here and there. Padding along, Baby told himself he liked winter better than summer. Then he came to the place, went down three steps, and forgot all about winter and summer. It was always the same here. It was not so much a place of temperatures as a place of lights and shades—dingy shades—and chromium, mirrors, the smell of beer, rum, whiskey, smoke—a stale blend of odors and shadows, darkness and music. It was a place of only one climate and that was it.

Baby's overcoat, hat and scarf went into a closet and settled familiarly on hooks. His old tuxedo walked over to the traps. Its black hands rubbed together briskly, driving out the chill. One hand fumbled in the dark at the base of the big drum and a second later a watery blue light winked on dully and flooded the drumhead. staring like a blind blue eye. Immediately the tuxedo sat down and worked its feet, with a slight rasping noise, firmly on the floor. The fingers thumped testingly on the hide, tightened the snare. They knew, like the ears, when it was right. Gingerly, as always, the right foot sought the big drum's pedal. The tuxedo was not ready yet. It had to fidget and massage its buttocks around on the chair, stretch out its arms and hug the whole outfit a fraction of an inch this way and that. Then the eyes glanced at the piano player, signaling ready. The drumsticks paused a moment tensely, slid into the beat, barely heard, accenting perfectly the shower of piano notes. Everything worked together for two choruses. Then the piano player tapered his solo gently, so that at a certain point Baby knew it was his. He brought the number to a lifeless close. Too early in the evening.

"Dodo," Baby said to the piano player, "Libby come in yet?"

Dodo sent a black hand up, slow as smoke, toward the ceiling. "Upstairs," he said, letting it fall to the keyboard with a faint faroff chord. It stirred there, gently worming music from the battered upright. Notes drew nearer, riding on ships and camels through a world of sand and water, till they came forthright from the piano, taking on patterns, as the other black hand came to life on the bass keys, dear to Dodo. Baby picked up his sticks, recognizing the number. He called it Dodo's Blues, though he had never heard Dodo call it anything. Every night about this time, when there was no crowd and Dodo hadn't yet put on the white coat he wore servicing the bar, they would play it. Baby half closed his eyes. With pleasure he watched Dodo through the clouds of rhythm he felt shimmering up like heat from his drums. Baby's eyes were only open enough to frame Dodo like a picture; everything else was out. It was a

picture of many uncommon dimensions; music, he could make out, was one of them. Here was a man, midgety, hunchbacked, black and proud, mostly all back and music. A little man who, when he was fixing to play, had to look around for a couple of three-inch telephone directories. Piling them on top of the piano bench, he sat down, with all their names and streets and numbers and exchanges under him. He had very little of thighs or stomach; mostly just back, which threw a rotund shadow on the wall. When he leaned farther away from the piano, so the light slanted through his hands, his shadow revealed him walking on his hands down the keyboard, dancing on the tips of fingery toes. Sometimes it seemed to Baby through half-closed eyes, when Dodo's body was bobbing on the wall and his hands were feet dancing on the keyboard, the dim light shaped him into a gigantic happy spider. When he became a spider you could forget he was a man, hunchbacked, runtish, black, and he too could forget perhaps that he had to be careful and proud. Perhaps he could be happy always if his back and size and color and pride were not always standing in the way. The piano made him whole. The piano taught him to find himself and jump clean over the moon. When he played, his feet never touched the pedals.

People were beginning to fill the place. They finished off the number, Baby smiling his admiration, Dodo scrupulously expressionless.

"For a young man . . ." Baby said.

Dodo got down off the telephone directories and threw them under the piano at the bass end, beyond the blue glow of the big drum. He had seen Libby come down the steps from the dressing room, a red dress, a gardenia. Dodo went behind the bar and put on his white service coat. Libby sat down at the piano.

Helplessly attracted, several men came over from the bar and leaned on the piano. They stared, burdening Libby's body with calculations. Singly at first and then, gathering unity, together. Libby sang a popular song. The men went back to the bar to get their drinks, which they brought over and set on top of the upright. Libby sang the words about lost love, and the men licked their lips vacantly and grinned. At the end of the song they clapped fiercely. Libby ignored them with a smile.

"Say, that was just fine," one man said. "Where you from anyhow?"

With a little grin Libby acknowledged Baby. Baby, beaming his veteran admiration of a fine young woman, nodded.

"Where you from?" the same man hammered away, sounding a note of embarrassment. "Huh?"

"New Orleans."

"Well, you don't say!" the man blurted out joyfully. "We're from down South too . . . Mississippi, matter of fact!"

Icily, Libby smiled her appreciation of this coincidence. She looked at Baby, who was also registering appropriately. Just think of that! Small world! And welcome to our city!

"Well, what do you know!" crowed the gentleman from Mississippi. "So you're from down South!" He was greatly impressed and already very drunk. He eyed his friends, four or five of them, distributing his discovery equally among them.

"You never know," he explained. The mantle of philosophy was draping over him when he appeared to suffer a pang of doubt. He turned quickly to Libby again, as though to make sure she was still there. His eyes jellied blearily and in them an idea was born.

"I know," he said. "Sing . . . sing——sing *Ol' Man River* for the boys. They all'd sure like that."

Without responding, Libby looked down at her hands, smiling. She measured chords between her thumbs and little fingers, working her amusement into the keys. Baby stared at the mottled hide of his snare drum, at the big one's rim worn down from playing Dixieland. The gentleman from Mississippi got worried.

"Aw, sing it," he pleaded. So Libby sang a chorus. The gentlemen from Mississippi were overwhelmed. They loved the song, they loved the South, the dear old Southland. Cinnamon seed and sandy bottom. Look away! Look away! They loved themselves. Look away! Look away! There was the tiniest touch of satire in Libby's voice, a slightly overripe fervor. Baby caught it and behind the bar Dodo caught it, but the men did not. Dodo had put down the sherry glass he was polishing and look away! look away!——good.

At the bridge of the second chorus, Libby nodded "Take it!" to Baby. He stood up, staggering from the heat of the fields, clenching his black toilworn fists. In profound anguish, he hollered, giving the Mississippi gentlemen all, really knocking himself out.

"Tote that Bar!"

"Lift that bale!"

"Git a little drunk——"

Baby grimaced in torment and did his best to look like ole Uncle Tom out snatchin' cotton.

Behind the bar, unnoticed, Dodo's sad black face had turned beatific. *"——And you land in jail!"* Dodo could not see the other faces, the big white ones, but he could imagine them, their heads fixed and tilted. It was too dark in the place, and he could only make out blurrily the outlines of craned necks. Always before, he was capable only of hating them. Now he had risen to great unfamiliar heights and was actually enjoying them. Surprised at this capacity in himself, yet proud he could feel this way, he was confused. He went further and started to pity them. But his memory stood up outraged at his forgetfulness and said kill that pity dead. Then he remembered he was really alone in the place. It was different with Libby and Baby, though they were black too. He did not understand why. Say their skin was thicker, only that was not why. Probably this was not the first time they had jived white folks to death and them none

the wiser. Dodo was not like that; he had to wait a long time for kicks like these. From his heart no pity went out for the white men. He kept it all to himself, where it was needed. But he had to smile inside of him with Libby and Baby. Only more. Look at that fool Baby!

"Bend your knees!

"Bow your head!

"And pick that cotton!

"Tiiillllll you're dead!"

Baby sat down with a thud, exhausted. The gentlemen from Mississippi brayed their pleasure. It was good to see that black boy all sweatin' and perspirin' that way. They clapped furiously, called for drinks, gobbled . . .

"And bring some for the darkies!"

Baby swallowed some of his drink. He looked at the beaten rim of the big drum, then at the sticks. He took out his pocketknife and scraped the rough splintery places smooth. He glanced at Libby and ventured the kind of smile he felt and knew she did. He finished his drink. The gentlemen from Mississippi hung around the piano, getting drunker, shouting in each other's face. Nervously, Libby lighted a cigarette. A college boy tried to make conversation with her while his honeyhaired girl assumed an attitude of genuine concern.

"Can you play *Hot Lips*?" the college boy asked.

"Don't know it," Libby lied. She wished she didn't.

"Can you play *Sugar Blues*?" Right back.

"Don't know it."

A Mississippi gentleman, heretofore backward, crowded up to the piano. He drained his drink. Then he moved closer to the piano, so as to brush Libby's left hand with the front of his trousers. Libby moved her hand. He followed it with his body, grinning lewdly.

"That's all right," he snickered. "Play lots of bass, honey."

The first gentleman from Mississippi, with a drink in his hand, stumbled over from the bar. He told Libby to play that *Ol' Man River* song some more. Libby hesitated. Then she lit into it, improvising all around it and it was a pleasure for Baby, but the first gentleman from Mississippi was not pleased. He said if that was the best she could do she had better try singing. Libby sang only one chorus. The gentlemen from Mississippi, though they applauded in vigorous competition, were not gratified. There was an air of general petulance among them. They remembered another time they heard the song, but it was not clear now what had made it different and better. They saw Baby all right, but they did not remember that it was he who had sung before, the good one that toted their bars, lifted their bales and landed drunkenly in their jails. Something was wrong, but in their present condition they saw no remedy. Each gentleman suspected the fault was personal, what with him drinking so heavy and all. Dodo, behind the bar, had not enjoyed the song the last

time, hating the coercion the white men practiced on Libby and Baby, and feared his advantage was slipping. Soon he would be down to earth again, or lower, and hate and fear them again.

"Can you play *Tiger Rag*?"

Libby made a face and then managed to turn it into a smile. "No."

The honeycolored girl wrenched her face into an attractive smile. Her lips puckered pregnantly.

"Can you play *St. Louis Blues*?" she asked.

"How you want it?" Libby said. She put out her cigarette. "Blues, rhumba . . . what kind a way?"

"Oh, play it low down. The way *you people* play it." So that Libby would understand perfectly, she executed a ponderous wink, narrowed her eyes and made them glitter wantonly behind the lashes.

"*You* know," she said.

Libby knew. She played *St. Louis,* losing herself in it with Baby. She left the college boy and the honeyhaired girl behind. Libby forgot she knew. She gazed at Baby with her eyes dreamy, unseeing, blind with the blue drum, her head nodding in that wonderful graceful way. Baby saw his old tuxedo in the mirror, its body shimmying on the chair, and he was pleased. The drums, beating figures, rocked with a steady roll. They were playing *Little Rock Getaway* now, fine young woman music, he thought.

And Libby was pleased, watching Baby. And then somehow, he vanished for her into the blue drum. The sticks still danced at an oblique angle on the snare, but there were no hands to them and Libby could not see Baby on the chair. She could only feel him somewhere in the blue glow. Abandoning herself, she turned into the piano. Now, still without seeing him, she could feel him with a clarity and warmth beyond all vision. Miniature bell notes, mostly blue, blossomed ecstatically, perished *affecttuoso,* weaving themselves down into the dark beauty of the lower keys, because it was closer to the drum, and multiplied. They came back to *St. Louis* again.

"Stop." The first gentleman from Mississippi touched Libby on the arm. "When I do that to you, that means Stop," he said. Libby chorded easily. "Some of the boys like to hear that *Ol' Man River* some more." He straightened up, turned to the other gentlemen, his smile assuring them it would not be long now.

"Kick off," Baby sighed.

But Libby broke into *St. Louis* again. Baby, with a little whoop, clambered after, slicing his sticks into the drum rim, a staccato Dixieland.

The first gentleman frowned, touching Libby's arm meaningfully. "Remember what that means? Means *Ol' Man River,*" he said calmly, as though correcting a slight error. "Toot sweet. Know what that means? That's French. Means right now." No harm done, however. Just that his friends here, a bunch of boys from down South, were dying to hear that song again, up to him to see that they got satisfaction, knew there would

be no trouble about that.

"We'll play it for you later on," Libby said quickly. "We got some requests besides yours. How many you got now, Baby?" Baby held up eight fingers, very prompt.

"Coming up," he said.

The first gentleman was undecided. "Well . . ." he drawled. Libby began a popular song. The first gentleman faced his friends. His eyes more or less met theirs and found no agreement. The boys looked kind of impatient, like a bunch of boys out for a good time and not doing so well. He turned to Libby again.

"We gotta have that *Ol' Man River* some more. Boys got their hearts set on it," he said. "Right away! Toot sweet! Toot———away!" He'd gone and made a joke, and the boys all laughed and repeated it to each other. Libby played on, as though she had not heard. The first gentleman took hold of her arm. She gazed steadily up into his bleary eyes.

"Not now. Later."

"No you don't. You gotta play it right now. For a bunch of boys come up North from down South. They all got a hankerin' to hear that *Ol' Man River* some more."

"So you best play it," another gentleman said, leaning down hard on the old upright piano. "On account of I'm gonna take and give ear. We kinda like how that old song sound up North. Whatcha all need. The drummer will sing," he said and looked at Baby. Baby looked back, unsmiling.

Libby chorded lightly, waiting for the gentlemen from Mississippi to get tired. They could not see how it was with her and Baby.

"You ain't gonna play?"

Baby's eyes strained hard in their sockets.

"We ain't comin'," Libby said.

Baby's eyes relaxed and he knew the worst part was over. They had made up their minds. They felt the same way about it. The rest was easy. Baby was even a little glad it had happened. A feeling was growing within him, realization coming with the passing moments that he had wanted to do this for a long time, for years and years, in a hundred different places he had played.

Secretly majestic, Baby sat at his drums, the goal of countless uplifted eyes——beseeching him. For it seemed hordes of white people were far below him, making their little commotions and noises, asking favors of him, like Lord, please bring the rain, or Lord, please take it away. Lord Baby. Waves of warm exhilaration washed into him, endearing him to himself. No, he smiled, I am sorry, no favors today. Yes, Lord, they all said, if that's the way it is, so be it. O.K., Baby said indulgently, so be it.

But somebody objected. The manager's voice barked, far below. It was scarcely audible to Baby in his new eminence. " . . . honoring requests," he heard, and " . . . trouble with the local," and " . . . wanting to get 'a

sweet-string trio' in this place a long time now." And the manager, strangely small, an excited pale pigmy, "that's all I can do in the circumstances," explaining to the gentlemen from Mississippi, also small, how it was, and them saying, "well, I guess so, well, I guess so all right, don't pay to pamper 'em, to give 'em an inch."

Baby noticed Libby had got up from the piano and put on her coat, the long dress hanging out at the bottom, red.

"I won't change," she said and handed Baby the canvas cover for the snare drum.

"Huh?" Baby said foggily. He set about taking his traps apart. Dodo came over, not wearing his white service coat, to help.

"You don't have to," Baby said.

They walked down the street towards the carline. Baby, going first, ploughed a path for Libby and Dodo in the snow. Window sills, parked cars and trees were ripe with it. The wind was dead and buried. Baby bore the big drum on his shoulder and felt the sticks pressing tight and upright in his vest pockets, two on each side. Libby had her purse and street clothes rolled up under her arm. Dodo carried the snare drum.

Softly as snow, Libby laughed. "That's all I can do in the circumstances," she said, laughing.

"I got your old circumstances," Baby said.

Then they were silent, tramping in the snow.

At the corner they waited in a store entrance for a southbound streetcar. Libby raised a foot now and then, shuddering with cold. Dead still, Dodo breathed covertly down inside the collar of his overcoat, retarding his breath, frowning at the little smoke trickling out as though it was the only thing left in the world to remind him he was alive. Baby talked of taking a cab and finally did go out into the street to hail one approaching. It slowed up, pulled over to the curb, hesitated . . . and lurched away, with Baby's hand reaching for the door. Baby watched the cab speed down the snowy street, following it for a few steps, speechless. There was nothing to do. Without looking he saw Libby and Dodo shivering in the store entrance. They had seen the cab come and go. They had not moved an inch. They waited, as before and always, for the Big Red.

"What's wrong with you, Baby," Libby called out. A tiny moment of silence, and then she was laughing, gradually louder, mellow octaves of melody, mounting, pluming . . .

Like her piano, it seemed to Baby, that fine young woman laughter.

"Why you laugh so much, woman?" he inquired plaintively from the street. Then he moved to join them, a few steps only, dallying at the curb to temper the abruptness of his retreat. Like her piano on *Little Rock,* that fine young woman laughter.

BYRON VAZAKAS:

The Glory

The basement clinic clots with men
slouched against venereal walls.
We stand in line and wait among
ciphers anxious to achieve
placement among the absent
numerals. Opposites, so often
true, invest infirmities
with joy: a medal won without
the loss of limb or mind.
The restless queue moves forward:
another arm invaded by
the needled enemy detached
from sense, detaching blood
to speak the wordless innocence
or guilt. Abstraction begins
with silence. Rain on the hot
morning streets can never help
with sounds and scents of summer;
and early sweeping in the hall
is bitterly betrayed by the
superstition of permanence.
The taxi-driver who will faint,
the flush playboy without comment,
the musician who runs away,
the poet who is so hard to kill,
are interlocked by paper forms
dehumanized in black on white
that flesh and blood may quake
and the whole soul be shaken by
routine as a stick to beat
or bar to batten down the mind.
Experience is nothing here,
nor class, nor act, nor art;
the animal deferred dignity
lurks in no bone exposed
to nakedness. The mind cannot
exult its form in flesh.
The tired arms sink down;
the obscene hair, the secret
deformity pleads best,
and the world knows.

ANKEY LARRABEE:

Three Studies in Modern Poetry

The Use of Death and Puritan Theology in Emily Dickinson's Poetry

Allen Tate is indisputably correct when he writes (in *Reactionary Essays*) that for Emily Dickinson "The general symbol of Nature . . . is Death." Death is, in fact, her poetic affirmation. Yet he continues with a questionable declaration: ". . . and her weapon against Death is the entire powerful dumb-show of the puritan theology led by Redemption and Immortality."

It is true that she is forced to experience and deal with nature before she can turn her back on it, but redemption and immortality are for her neither weapon nor protection. If these concepts deserve any place at all, it is rather because they are avenues of escape from death. In her love poems, as well as in the group dealing with time and eternity, she returns constantly to her preoccupation with death—both as it is incorporated in all of nature, and as it encompasses it on all sides. Here she faces and resolves the issue many times, but never wholly with what Tate is pleased to call her "puritan theology."

Certainly the love poems provide the more personally representative passages from which to draw an argument against Tate's statement. A recurrent theme in these poems is the separation of two lovers by death, and their reunion in immortality. But Emily Dickinson's conception of this immortality is centered in the beloved himself, rather than in any theological principle:

> A heaven in a gaze
> A heaven of heavens, the privilege
> Of one another's eyes
>
> * * *
>
> The realm of you
>
> * * *
>
> Love is anterior to life
> Posterior to death
>
> * * *
>
> I and thee
> Permitted face to face to be,
> After a life, a death we'll say,—
> For death was that, and this in thee.

The immortality which concerns her arises directly from her connection with a second person, and never exists as an abstract or Christian condition:

> Elysium is as far as to
> The very nearest room,
> If in that room a friend await.

In this same way, redemption is also reduced to the simplest personal equation. In these poems redemption, as such, is never mentioned; rather the awareness of it permeates the entire section. Redemption for Emily Dickinson is too synonymous with immortality to receive much individual distinction. There is little talk of heaven or hell, except as they exist within the poet herself:

> And were you saved,
> And I condemned to be
> Where you were not,
> That self were hell to me.

It is not the "dumb-show of the puritan theology" which protects the poet, but her own redefinition of Christian values. This redefinition is not important because of any radical deviation from the church's precepts, but because the catchwords of pulpit and hymnal have been given an intimate and casual interpretation. She speaks of Death's coming for her, yet has him arrive in a carriage to take her for an afternoon's drive. She writes of Calvaries, but they are "Calvaries of Love"; the grave is "my little cottage." Typically, her reaction to the thought of Christ's presence is:

> . . . . your face
> Would put out Jesus',
> That new grace
>
> Glow plain and foreign
> On my homesick eye,
> Except that you, than he
> Shone closer by.

The familiar and comforting words that, for her, spell everyday life are used to mask unrealized abstractions. It is by contracting the illimitable spaces of after-life to her own focus, that she can find peace, for "their height in heaven comforts not." She fills the abyss with her talk of tea and carriages and the littleness of time. Puritan theology may have given her a fear of the loneliness of death, the Bible and hymnal may have provided her with patterns and phrases, but these equip her with terminologies, molds in which her personal conceptions can take form, rather than actual Christian conceptions.

Death for Emily Dickinson, therefore, was an uncomfortable lacuna which could in no way be bridged, except by transposing it into a more homely metaphor. Death as a caller, the grave as a little house—these are a poetic whistling in the dark. In a safe and ordered microcosm, she found death an ungoverned and obsessing presence. It could be neither forgotten nor accepted in its present form. Death had possessed too many of her friends to be reckoned with as a complete abstraction. But when she translated this oppression into a language of daily routine, she could blot out the reality of death with pictures conjured up by the surrounding images:

> What if I file this mortal off,
> See where it hurts me,—that's enough,—
> And wade into liberty?

* * *

. . . this is said to be
But just the primer to a life
Unopened, rare, upon the shelf
Clasped yet to him and me.

* * *

I sing to use the waiting . . .
And tell each other how we sang
To keep the dark away.

The idea of filing it off, of wading into death and its liberty, of calling death a primer, or of singing away eternity, is the balance of known with unknown which Emily Dickinson must portion out to herself before she can rest.

Allen Tate is on the right track in referring to death as her "general symbol of Nature." It is the logical culmination of nature, and the greatest example of the change which is constantly moving through nature. Emily Dickinson regards nature as resembling death in that it can, for the moment, be brought within her garden walls, but still spreads around her life and beyond her door, impossible to hold or to measure. Both are forces which must be discussed and rehearsed constantly. They are too present and compelling to be pushed into the recesses of the mind. The brute energy of both must be leashed to the minutely familiar. Emily Dickinson's wild nights are bound and her fears assuaged with the images of her immediate reality. But this immediate reality is made up of her personal terms, and has come from her own heart, not from the tenets of her church.

The Symbol of the Sea in Crane's "Voyages"

Crane celebrates the interrelation of passion and death in the "Voyages," and with the sea as his symbol for this union, develops each thought in a pattern of sea imagery. In his introduction to Crane's poetry, Waldo Frank writes of "the sea—source of life, first Mother— . . . death to man" as Crane's "principle of unity and release from the contradictions of personal existence." In this group of poems, as in all his life, Crane was engulfed by the sea—of lust, of memory, and of annihilation.

The first of the "Voyages," written three years before the rest of the group, strikes an introductory note. The protagonists are children, the mood and the weather a bright intensity,—"the fresh ruffles of the surf." "bright striped urchins flay each other with sand." There is no promise of death or passion in the sea as it exists for the boys. While Crane ends the poem with his inevitable warning: "the bottom of the sea is cruel," he is addressing himself more than the children. He speaks of "a line you must not cross," but he is a spectre in this scene ("And could they hear me I would tell them") and cannot reach his audience. These are reflections of his own childhood which, in that remote world, are deaf to counsel which the adult calls across the years.

The second poem passes from the freshness and brilliance of this childhood and its guileless conception of the sea, to a formal mingling of music and waters. Crane turns away from his child-self, as sea and time "wind the hours." This is in contrast to the introductory poem, and dwells upon the sea's deliberate movements. Its "rimless flood, unfettered lees wardings" are here identified with passion's currents. The sea's "undinal vast belly moonward bends, laughing the rapt inflections of our love" is a major chord in Crane's theme of erotic immersion. "These poinsettia meadows of her tides," and "the dark confessions her veins spell" are images of the timelessness of lust and of the sea, both of which are joined in the image "sleep, death, desire, close round one instant in one floating flower." Crane, the flotsam of time and desire, is carried deathwards in the cradle of the sea—"bequeath us to no earthly shore until is answered in the vortex of our grave the seal's wide spindrift gaze toward paradise."

Crane's third section is a variation on Eliot's "Death by Water." But the forgetfulness of "profit and loss" comes more easily to Crane. Here not death but mere immersion suffices to divide the swimmer from his earth. The physical oneness which Crane feels for the sea is still erotic in this passage, but in a less personalized, almost cosmic sense:

> Past whirling pillars and lithe pediments
> Light wrestling there incessantly with light
> Star kissing star through wave on wave unto
> Your body rocking!

Here he writes: "where death, if shed, presumes no carnage, but this single change,"—another configuration of Eliot's "sea change." This is the recurrent belief that death appears, not as a conclusion, but rather as one of the several events which alter the individual's contradictions. Certainly the last lines of this section, "upon the steep floor flung from dawn to dawn the silken skilled transmemberment of song," suggest a continuation of life and motion, but in a different frame of reference. Crane approaches this release in death with alacrity, transforming, as always, the image before him into that of a lover: "permit me voyage, love, into your hands."

The fourth poem in "Voyages" returns to the intermingling of sea and flower imagery of the second section. The sea, to Crane a "stream of greater love" than any other known to him, is a symbol of affirmation. Through the objective correlative of the rainbow, "spectrum of the sea and pledge," the sea draws him to it with a "counted smile of hours and days." To Crane, water is a higher element than earth, and therefore he goes, an earthly creature, "singing, this mortality alone through clay aflow immortally to you." When he mingles with the sea, he touches an eroticism of sea and flowers. The sensual flower images are, with Crane, drawn into the sea:

> Shall they not stem and close in our own steps
> Bright staves of flowers and quills to-day as I
> Must first be lost in fatal tides to tell?

This is a repetition of Crane's primary thought that he will know and experience nothing until he has drowned. Nothing can be more than "bright insinuations" within the enclosure of his experience, ("that my years have caught") until, following his desire, Crane "mingles mutual blood" with his lover, the sea. Finally, in "this expectant, still exclaim" of love within which Crane has lost himself, sea and flower join their mastery over his senses, to become his "secret oar and petals of all love."

The fifth poem depicts the sea as a cradle of forgetfulness. Here it is an image of sleep, in which passion and the exhaustion which follows are merged. The opening line, "meticulous, past midnight in clear rime," is a much sharper image than any in the preceding poem. This section is almost an interlude between phases of desire. It is the momentary respite from ecstasy, but sleep is soon broken ("the cables of our sleep so swiftly filed") under the insistence of passion:

> Now no cry, no sword
> Can fasten or deflect this tidal wedge,
> Slow tyranny of moonlight, moonlight loved
> And changed.

Here the image of the lover, the sea, is given human proportions. The water metaphors remain, but are secondary counterparts to this figure, "in all the argosy of your bright hair I dreamed nothing so flagless as this piracy." Crane sees the two lovers parted in their transport, drowning separately as they would in the sea, each dying alone in a sleep of fulfillment:

> Your eyes already in the slant of drifting foam;
> Your breath sealed by the ghosts I do not know:
> Draw in your head and sleep the long way home.

The last of the "Voyages" is a tone poem of places and forms. The first image is one of a new sea, lifeless and polar. Passing through season and space, the sea's inanimate distance turns to "beating leagues of monotone." The sea is no longer a symbol of physical love as it has appeared in the previous poems. It is rather a source of passion and rebirth. "Creation's blithe and petalled word," a confirmation of the future. Yet in this ratification there are still traces of Crane's formal sensual imagery. Belle Isle, place of good hope, is the "unfolded floating dais," a ground for passion still. This is the summary of Crane's treatment of the sea as the "principle of unity and release from the contradictions of personal existence." In the last verse we see his final commemoration:

> The imaged Word, it is, that holds
> Hushed willows anchored in its glow.
> It is the unbetrayable reply
> Whose accent no farewell can know.

Prufrock and Joseph Wood Krutch

> "As civilization grows older it too has more and more facts thrust upon its consciousness and is compelled to abandon one after another, quite as the child does, certain illusions which have been dear to it."
>
> —Joseph Wood Krutch

If civilization, as a whole, progresses in the life-pattern of an individual, the typical man of each era will represent a different stage of emotional and intellectual development,—or so Mr. Krutch would have us believe. If we are now in a meso-adolescent or pre-adult period, our hero must be a Prufrock, not a Hamlet. For the very reason that Hamlet is such a thoroughly tragic figure, dignified and resolved, Krutch points out that he would never serve as an example of the twentieth century's tragedy. Our time demands the little man as protagonist, the man whose sorrows are caused by his pettiness rather than by the jealousy of the gods. Prufrock, like the generation of which Krutch is both biographer and participant, stands lost between Victorian romanticism and our modern inability "to impose upon the phenomenon of life an interpretation acceptable to his desires."

The opening stanza of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is wholly romantic. All images of loneliness and nostalgia are in the Victorian tradition, and form a world in which he is the only alien. This is the realm to which Krutch refers in the passage: "Like the child growing into manhood, he passes from a world which is fitted to him into a world for which he must fit himself . . . the gradual weakening of man's confidence." In this case the evening and its emotional connotations are Prufrock's world, in which he is the dominant figure surrounded by a host of sensual images. He is forced to pass from this into an environment to which he is spiritually incongruous. The false culture and social amenities of the drawing room are frightening to him, and he enters their circle unwillingly ("time to turn back and descend the stair," "do I dare disturb the universe?"). That he should leave his unhappiness and remain within this world is again understandable, for to Krutch: "in so far as we adhere to a code of conduct, we do so largely because certain habits still persist, not because we can give any logical reason for preferring them." As far as one can tell from the poem, Prufrock himself offers no valid reason for his social castigations. He admits that his life is wasted, measured out with coffee spoons, and that he is constantly and acutely ill-at-ease ("And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin"), but offers no justification for himself except in the degree that the poem, as a whole, is a sick-bed chart of his "case," and as such an unconscious explanation. Rather, since custom is stronger in him than rebellion, he continues to affect this society because he has been caught up in it. His evenings and sunsets are seen with regret, as an adult nostalgically looks back upon his childhood without desiring to return to it.

In speaking of our present society, Krutch says: "disturbing its thought, despising its passions, realizing its impotent unimportance in the universe, it can tell itself no stories except those which make it still more acutely aware of its trivial miseries." If one were to read "he" for "it," this statement could be the essence of Prufrock. He thinks of his thought only as "a hundred indecisions," of his passions in "how should I begin to spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways," and his "impotent unimportance" in "I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker, and in short, I was afraid." The whole of the "Love Song" is a story which Prufrock recites to himself, full of wishes and justifications, but leading ultimately to an awareness "of his trivial miseries." Prufrock knows only too well that he is "grown slightly bald," a fate never accorded Hamlet; that he is growing older and fatter, and, finally, that any revelation he might pronounce would be met with "that is not what I meant at all. That is not it at all."

With Krutch, Prufrock obviously feels that "one can neither resist nor yield gracefully to a carefully catalogued psychosis." At the end of the poem, he turns his back not only on his own inadequacies, but also on those of his society, and having failed either to justify or to abandon them completely, accepts for the moment his romantic visions. Certainly Prufrock will return to the present tense of living, but when last seen, he is lingering beside his mermaids, querulous and for the moment alone. To him, these sea-girls are his "solution of the problem of existence, the reconciliation to life by means of the tragic spirit (which) is now only a fiction surviving in art."

AMONG RECENT BOOKS:

RICHARD EBERHART:

WALLACE STEVENS: *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*
The Cummington Press.

Ur-Review

The Ideal Reader desires the tragic poet. This places every practicing poet at a handicap from the start. There are embedded notions about what constitutes tragic poetry. The Ideal Reader lusts for Shakespeare, is happy there.

Another point, but to be stated with less conviction, is that the Ideal Reader longs for change in the practicer. He rejoices deeply in a late, increasing consciousness in Yeats; he had to accept the religious bias of Eliot and looks to his later phase. He would not consider the *Cantos* sufficient evidence of growth of soul. He knew disappointment in *What Are Years* for a similar reason. This does not mean that all these are not enjoyable in different ways.

Again, the Ideal Reader, more tenuously considering, but being unable to do other, being as he is cast upon a thousand thorns of his age, seeks in his writer such deep antagonism to its ills that a certain personal violence, or an equally personal violent statement, will result. He will think non-violent poetry an evasion of duty, although he knows the defeat of death by violence, the probable lack of excellence of poetry violently produced.

Stevens is not a tragic poet. He has not changed, or at most not in the sense of our Ideal Reader. For violence, canon-wit.

But there is no Ideal Reader.

But there is this civilization.

But there is Wallace Stevens, almost beyond compare a mind-painter, -feinter, and -familiar, a giver of pleasure, an old-timer, a spider with a belly full of web, a delicatest, a hautbuoy, a conscripter of iridescences, a hutch of transitory lust, a sky-kisser, an end to a means, an assurance-man, screes of fay, faith of faery, furnished room of his own, an enjoycer, an honor where honor is dew, a reflector sight, Mallarmoreal.

To the heart o' effulgence.

These are *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction* impossible of attainment. "It" must be abstract, change, and give pleasure, three trusty absolutes—Stevens from the start liked the three-line stanza. He employs a type of it here: each poem of three sections having seven three-line stanzas, without rhyme. There are ten poems to a section, and one final poem, set off, which generalizes outside the other matter, which was most particular. The exterior form, then, is preconceived, the book written to the order of the mind.

Suffice it to say there is not tragic utterance. Sufficient unto the changes over earlier work are the subtleties thereof. One does not protest when drinking a sparkling water.

When Yeats old wished to be a foolish, passionate man he entered partially the region of Lear. His ultimate sincerity shot back and forth through all of his life, and ours, and of life itself. When Stevens says "You must become an ignorant man again," authority is somehow not there: one is only convinced of an intellectual idea, which the following two lines underline. There is no personal violence, and no tragic necessity, only a mental wish. The whole book is an argument, tricked out with delicious spells.

The sparkles, the real toads intrude so that most of the poems are more enjoyable in their parts than entire. But some are wholes, and these are wonders: page 16 is a wonder. Pages 37, 34, and 40 are wonder-somewhat-ful. I cannot detail here elegancies of the "flor-abundant force." We must remember of poetry that it is a house of many mansions. We err when we ask a poet to be anything but himself. I have erred in suggesting an Ideal Reader who must dispossess Stevens of a superStevenshood, purposely, because it is so often, and so naturally, done. But in Stevens, in lines like "Brushed up by brushy wind in brushy clouds," "The President ordains the bee to be / Immortal," or stanzas two and three on page 27, there is his authority. The cult of Stevens may be an expression of the age struggling toward its opposite (cannot a business man be poet?). Poets who begin late in life sometimes triumph where others do not. It may be reserved for Stevens yet a decade hence to proclaim a Supreme Fiction. It will take a shocking change, however, to kill the Fiction.

CHARLES NEIDER:

ERSKINE CALDWELL: *All Night Long.* Duell, Sloan & Pearce.

KAY BOYLE: *Primer for Combat.* Simon & Schuster.

DAVID CORNEL DeJONG: *Benefit Street.* Harpers.

ALBERT HALPER: *The Little People.* Harpers.

Erskine Caldwell's new novel is no more than a longish short-story, and is simply the account of two guerilla raids on the Germans in Russia, the only pretense to unity being that in the beginning the protagonist, Sergei, and his wife are separated and at the end are thrown together, slightly the worse for mauling. Everywhere Germans are slain in marvelous numbers and wondrous variety by unbelievably fortunate guerillas who, while the invaders are frozen silly by the cold, seem almost to sweat in it, and the inescapable conclusion is that Caldwell has written not a novel but a wish-fulfilment, his private revenge for the atrocities he has witnessed in the Soviet. Beyond that fact, the story is fast-moving, over-simplified and somewhat wooden, and is remarkably similar to the books boys used to read in their early teens: the Altsheller series, the Boy Allies, the Merriwell saga. There is even a touch of Hollywood's conception of aesthetic and moral balance in the fact that Fyodor, Sergei's great

friend, a prodigious slitter of Nazi throats, is killed just at the point where Sergei rescues his wife from a German brothel.

Similar notes of horror, atrocity and the ridiculous weave through Kay Boyle's book on the fall of France, but here the ridiculous element depends not on the action or inaction of the characters, but on two technical flaws. The first is that the book is in the form of a diary—not a superficial form here, through which the bright narrative may run, but the actual basis of the fiction, as though Miss Boyle threw a real diary, with minor changes, between covers and called it a novel, without attempting further the difficult task of transmuting autobiography into fiction. (The diary, incidentally, is prefaced by a list of dramatis personae, and it is one hell of a job trying to identify characters by turning to the list.) The second flaw is the tortuous and adolescent love affair—completely meaningless to me, without beginning or end—which the heroine experiences through the medium of correspondence with a German Aryan refugee in the French Foreign Legion in North Africa. The devotion of pages and pages to the love affair and the injection of it in the midst of moving descriptions of mass woe are an insult to the nobler intent of the book.

The Caldwell and Boyle opera are not novels because one is but a flimsy story and the other more or less raw diary; the DeJong and Halper are not novels because they fail to be more than masses of unselected scenes exposing certain people in action. The latter books are of the slice-of-life school, which is usually an excuse for the development of pessimistically naturalistic episodes, with lots of sex and oppression. Halper's is the economic angle, and therefore his "little people," his "thirty-dollar-a-week souls," are found in a department store, where they can be properly ground under the heel. DeJong's people, serving his interest in psychology and decadence, find their unity in a boarding house on Benefit Street in Providence, Rhode Island.

These four novels are easily adaptable to comparison and contrast and can be juxtaposed in innumerable ways. Perhaps the most instructive analysis is to separate them into two categories, the Boyle and Caldwell novels in one and the Halper and DeJong in the other. The first category can be called the novel of intension, the second the novel of extension—arbitrary and temporary terms, of course, but nonetheless interesting. It becomes evident that while the novel of intension has for its primary purpose the communication of a vital thought or experience and the creation of sympathy through stirring the emotions, the novel of extension has in reality little if anything directly to say and interests itself therefore in probing and dissection. The novel of intension is compact, energetic, possessing a good deal of plot; it depends on few characters rather than many, and achieves a climax of structure and mood; it is fairly clean, like the decks of a battleship stripped for action; and it runs swiftly, in an effort to keep pace with its material. It enlightens through vicarious suffering. Thus Caldwell seeks to rouse us from our apathy and prejudice regarding Russia by demonstrating how the Germans, or Nemetskies as the Russians call them, operate in an occupied land, and by telling us, through the medium of fiction, that the Russians are great fighters because they fight with their hearts as well as their bodies, for their ideals as well as their soil. And Miss Boyle seeks to awaken us to the horror of a great country's betrayal by its own statesmen to an ancient enemy; she tries to make us realize that fascism is not a respecter of national boundaries, that it is an international force more attractive to the members of ruling classes than the rather out-of-fashion (to them) love of country.

The novel of extension is leisurely and episodic and since its interest is in peeking, it includes many characters and situations and is seemingly unmindful of losing itself in repetition and formlessness. In these respects the DeJong and Halper novels are remarkably similar. They sustain interest for half their length and then let it sag through repetition. They excel in energy and ingenuity and lose themselves in clever insights. They are oppressive and depressing—and fascinating, up to a point. But they desperately need a sense of proportion, or call it a breath of air, if you like, or a touch of variety. For although the authors have nothing strong and direct to say, it is not to be assumed that they are without a thesis. Halper's thesis is that the little people are oppressed by a fate—economic, biologic, ideological, intellectual—it doesn't matter which. And he drives his point home so thoroughly and endlessly

that he corrupts it through constant distortion. DeJong's thesis is that a boarding house is a temporary abode for irregular people on the way either up or down, and that these people are filled with loathing or with delight in their assiduous pursuit of contemplating their own navels.

It is futile to use this sort of analysis to pronounce value judgments, to say, for instance, that the novel of intension is more desirable than its antithesis because it possesses a moral purpose its antithesis does not. Caldwell's novel, for all its fine purpose, is not much of a novel and not very striking propaganda, either, to anyone who has read the three Molotov notes on German atrocities in the U. S. S. R. (Required reading, incidentally; they can be obtained from the Soviet Consulate in New York or Washington.) On the other hand, the DeJong and Halper novels, for all their nice peeking, dissection and sensitivity, haven't much point at a time when the world is aflame.

Lest I be accused of being too severe and perhaps unkind in discussing these novels, let me say that all four are interesting and show a wealth of good will and talent.

CHARLES SHATTUCK:

EUDORA WELTY: *The Robber Bridegroom.* Doubleday, Doran.

RICHARD SULLIVAN: *Summer after Summer.* Doubleday, Doran.

In introducing Eudora Welty to readers of *A Curtain of Green*, Katherine Anne Porter remarked that "from the beginning until now, she loved folk tales, fairy tales, old legends." The flowering of this affection of Miss Welty's is now before us. Her new book is, to begin with, a retelling of the ancient European children's story, reset in Mississippi in the days of the earliest planters. Miss Welty has toned down the japish bloodthirstiness of the story as the Grimm brothers recorded it, and vastly heightened the decorative and the marvelous. It is a playful book, thematically delicate and elusive, on pleasure bent. The main pleasure, perhaps, lies in the skilful weaving-in of dozens of fragments and motifs from dozens of other folk-tales that hover distantly on the edge of memory: there is a cruel stepmother who is also a nagging wife, an old widow with six ugly daughters and an idiot son, a robber by night who is a gentleman by day and who is sent out to capture himself, a fantastical boaster, three earless innkeepers, a talking head, a flying cow, a friendly panther, an Enormous Alligator, a man who fights all night with a willow tree, a masked lover whose mistress may never see his face. And much more. This rich synthesis I take to be the main pleasure, at least for anyone who, like the author, loves old legends. It makes me want again and ardently to have at my bed's head Stith Thompson's amazing treasury of story-stuff, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature.*

Miss Welty's prose is, as ever, exquisitely tuned to subject—for this book it is bright with things for the eye to see, as a (grown-up) child's story ought to be; on second reading and third, I find, the images grow brighter, as they ought, and accumulate feeling in their growth. Most striking of all are those curious passages which establish the landscape—the Mississippi forests—deep, magical, embracing, hostile forests, as in Chateaubriand—full of gentlemanly or merciless robbers, still-footed watching animals, and fierce, wise, picture-book Indians: "Here are all possible trees in a forest, and they grow as tall and as great and as close to one another as they could ever grow in the world. Upon each limb is a singing bird, and across this floor, slowly and softly and forever moving into profile, is always a beast, one of a procession, weighted low with his burning coat, looking from the yellow eye set in his head . . . The buffalo on his sinking trail, pawing the ice till his forelock hangs in the spring, and the deer following behind to the salt places to transfix his tender head . . . Two long ripples are following down the Mississippi behind the approaching somnolent eyes of the alligator . . . And all around are the Indians . . ."

The hero of *Summer after Summer* is Eddie Nails, a normal, lonely, dull young man of twenty-six, a small-salaried clerk in drygoods in a small midwestern town, with a wife enceinte, a girl-child of three, and a one-bedroom bungalow (rented), complete with grass to mow, furnace to fix, streaked plaster walls, and floors that creak when you walk on them. The substance of the novel is Eddie's drearily pointless behaviour. He loves his wife Anna, sometimes, with engulfing tenderness, and sometimes he hates her; he spoils the child Julie, then scolds at her with senseless fury; he lusts after the neighborhood slut, retires from an encounter with her like a frightened schoolboy, and wallows in detective novels, whiskey, prayer, and self-reproach to still the gonadal thunder—then is smugly self-righteous when he discovers and reveals to Anna that the slut has drawn some other wife's husband into her meshes. And so on. All that he does, in short, is normal.

The point of the novel is that all that he does is platitude—ridiculous and ugly (and Sullivan so labels with terrifying exactness most of what we take to be Good Things) because Eddie lives these things without intelligence or courage or joy. He submits to life and temporizes and makes the best of it. He lives without intention. If Eddie is your Everyman, as he is mine, his story is a priceless castigative.

Technically the novel is not quite flawless. The opening incidents seem, while one reads them, simply trivial; one must get well into the book before he can see their thematic worth. The Temptress, Nellie Marie Hocking, is too easily conjured up to be credible. And the climactic episode, the birthing of Mary Ellen, (expectant-father stuff) is made too much of. It is gratifying, however, to read a first novel that is a real novel, making its effect, that is, by accumulation: it is by no means a short story unduly protracted. The writing, throughout, is simple, unaffected, faithful.

For a brilliant epitome of the whole (He thought he never got what he wanted), see the paint-job-in-the-basement, pp. 191-194.

AEROL ARNOLD:

MAXWELL GEISMAR: *Writers in Crisis.* Houghton Mifflin Co.

FERNER NUHN: *The Wind Blew from the East.* Harpers.

If the crisis of our time has heightened certain of our political perceptions, it has clouded our literary ones. Since MacLeish began his campaign against the irresponsibles, much nonsense has been written about American literature since 1914; and the recent reflections of Oliver Allston, with their preoccupation with optimism and mental health as primary criteria for literary excellence, have added to the confusion.

Both Mr. Geismar and Mr. Nuhn are in the Van Wyck Brooks tradition. Like Mr. Brooks, they fear European influence on American writers and would have our writers turn their eyes back home. They want to hear about what is good in America. They have heard too much about what is bad. They want literature with a positive attitude.

Whatever may be the merits of their desires, the facts of history indicate that where critics rant, writers go their own way. Roger Ascham considered rhyme "foreign," contrary to the English tradition; yet rhyme conquered English poetry. History shows, further, that no great literature grows up uninfluenced by the literature of other countries. Throughout its magnificent history English literature has built on borrowed materials.

Regionalism in America has grown out of a sense of inferiority; it is the compensatory mechanism of writers who fear to match their understanding and ability with the best in world literature. It is the product of a naive faith in the magic of place. The worship of place is a phase of nineteenth-century mysticism closely allied to nationalism. Prior to Hitler German critical journals ran over with the glories of regionalism. When Hitler came he made capital of this worship.

It is indeed curious that, at a time when Americans have come to understand the futility of political isolation, our critics raise the cry for literary isolation.

Geismar's *Writers in Crisis* contains studies of Lardner, Hemingway, Dos Passos, Faulkner, Wolfe, and Steinbeck. Compared with Beach's *American Fiction 1920-1940* it is a pretty feeble job, suffering from confusion in point of view and a complete misunderstanding of one of the key problems in contemporary criticism—one to which Thomas Mann devoted a great part of his literary life—namely, the nature of the artist. Geismar's idea of the relation of the artist to society and of its effect on him is on the level of a freshman sociological text. A sneering tone in much of his comment and the sacrifice of sense to the sound of a phrase further alienate the reader.

Geismar's failures are failures in taste and in philosophy as well. He mistakes bombast in Thomas Wolfe for what he calls a "spiritual positive," and cannot see that social dissection such as one finds in Dos Passos is a necessary and even a great task of art. He urges the need of an "integrated individualism, not an infantile one" without realizing that much of the insight we have into the diseases of our time we have from novelists he and Brooks consider infantile. To any reader of Proust, Petain and Vichy seemed inevitable; nor can we say with any certainty that Dos Passos' picture of U. S. A. bears no resemblance to America at war. One must be three-fourths blind not to see that, besides being engaged in a war against our enemies abroad, we are fighting a much deeper war at home. Waldo Frank has written of this deeper war. What has Geismar been reading?

It is to Erskine Caldwell, Albert Halper, Leane Zugsmith, Richard Wright, and Clifford Odets that Geismar looks with hope. Caldwell should have had a place in this study. As for the rest, they might well go to school to Hemingway and Dos Passos to learn something about their craft.

Ferner Nuhn's book is another matter. The man can write, and until the trilogy he plans is complete no just evaluation is possible. His political speculation and literary criti-

cism are tied together with much that is unclear and often contradictory. He is fascinated by geography. But he is also haunted by the ghost of Woodrow Wilson as the lost American abroad. And the moral he draws is that Americans should stay home until they have grown up—that is, have a sense of what America is. Unfortunately, the man who would be a citizen of the world must venture into the world and there make mistakes. Only so he can grow up. Americans are not so naive as Nuhn and many midwestern isolationists would have us believe. Nor can the failure of our dreams after the last war all be laid on Mr. Wilson's shoulders. We will have learned much from that bitter experience if we avoid the grossest errors of that peace when we settle this war.

From American literature Nuhn selects three men "who started and did not start with their own, or did not know, when they started, what their own was." It is not that Henry Adams, Henry James, and T. S. Eliot went to the past for their orientation, but that they went back "half-unwittingly." All that Nuhn says of these three writers is interesting. Much of it may even be true. But nowhere does the problem of the value of James and Eliot as artists come in for serious discussion. James' contribution to the content and the form of the novel seems to have escaped his attention; yet an Englishman, Stephen Spender, showed clearly how much contemporary literature owes to James. We must raise a question, then: Would James and Adams and Eliot have been better artists if they had stayed at home or lived in Iowa? The answer may be suggested by looking at their contemporaries who did stay home.

Literary criticism is on the wrong track when it seeks the measure of an artist in his optimism, his political creed, or his geographical loyalty. The great writers are those who say the greatest amount to those who understand in all countries. How they have come by what they have to say matters little. Artists travel strange paths in search of their truth, and critics cannot direct their search. If Silone and Koestler have come to believe that moral and psychological problems have greater meaning than political problems, what man who has not suffered as they for his political convictions can say "No"? And if Koestler and Silone and Dos Passos leave their early habitats—geographical and philosophical—in their search, who dares tell them "Stay"? Who standing at our point in history knows where one must stay?

KERKER QUINN:

ALFRED KAZIN: *On Native Grounds.* Reynal and Hitchcock.

ERNEST MARCHAND: *Frank Norris, a Study.* Stanford University Press.

Alfred Kazin's book on American literary themes, methods, and personalities of the last half-century surveys the same territory as last year's *Intellectual America* by his friend, Oscar Cargill. Though his essays on individual writers are commonly less bulky than Cargill's and though he refrains from considering the poets (whom Cargill whirled through mechanically, he contrives to present a solider examination of the period than Cargill, or any other critic, has done. His judgments are balanced, his facts accurate, his running-accounts of various "movements" like Progressivism easier to follow. Whereas Cargill was kept busy tracing the development of first one, then another, ideology—naturalism, primitivism, symbolism, etc.—from its European mother-soil to its American bloom (and, sometimes, withering), Kazin has depended upon the safer though not easier plan of interweaving all the strands into one chronicle.

His chapters are grouped under three headings: The Search for Reality (1890-1917), The Great Liberation (1918-1929), and The Literature of Crisis (1930-1940). Up until the last section he is not especially venturesome. He writes with such sincerity, discernment, and gusto on Howells, the muckrakers, Dreiser, Hemingway, that many a reader will agree with the publisher's belief in the utter freshness of Kazin's interpretation. Actually, there is only a seeming freshness: the interpretation is new chiefly in the sense that it is not mossy-traditional, but synthesizes and tempers the hundreds of revaluations, journalistic and academic, which have for a decade or more been providing uncoordinated suggestions for supportable appraisals of our writers. Kazin's tying-up and smoothing-out have been alertly managed.

Obliged to do more of his own sorting and judging of the work of the thirties, Kazin has found his road bumpy, and has not succeeded in holding to the controlled, authoritative steering of the first two-thirds of his book. He drives into a ditch when confronted with the criticism of Blackmur and Ransom, runs down Erskine Caldwell in ten lines, though giving John O'Hara a lift of four pages, does not even see Katherine Anne Porter (and others who are not central in The Literature of Crisis), and makes a rather wild dash for the garage shouting some inconclusive things about literature and democracy.

The history could be advantageously rewritten, to eliminate jargon like "emerged as a

shining example," "last glowing ember of a dying century," and "perfect . . . despite . . ." It could also do with some stubborn proofreading: there are three spelling mistakes, for instance, in three pages about James T. Farrell. And occasionally it stumbles over proper names, or generalizes misleadingly, as when two novels are called "thumping romances" though one of the pair hasn't a thump in it. But the book is, undeniably, one we have needed and should be grateful for.

One of the important figures of Kazin's story is examined in detail in Marchand's *Frank Norris.* For thirty years after Norris's death, his "position in American literature" remained a "frozen" taken-for-granted thing, and only in the last decade have we had investigation of his life (by his fellow-Californian, Franklin Walker), of his indebtedness to Zola (by a Parisian, Marius Biencourt), and of his contribution to modern realism (by Kazin, among many). Marchand has clearly recognized one of the large tasks yet to be done: to place Norris against the social and intellectual background of the nineties and thereby to define more exactly his literary qualities.

The principle chapters cover Norris's critical standards, his susceptibility to the cult of red blood and supermen, his use of romantic along with naturalistic elements, his social attitudes, and his style. Substantial and careful in themselves, these divisions remain divisions literally, and they give the reader an inadequate sense of the interdependence of their several subjects and, especially with *Blix* and the "lesser" work, an inadequate treatment of the novels *as* novels. And though the watery Graustarkian romance which Norris fought in criticism and fictional practice is admirably sketched in, Marchand does very little with the more rewarding job of comparing Norris's characters, story-motifs, and story-devices with those of his literary allies and near-allies (from Balzac to Richard Wright)—the result being an unfortunate isolation, despite summary comparisons of Norris with Zola, Hugo, Stevenson, and Kipling.

In a final chapter Marchand does a painstaking job of tracking Norris's critical reputation through the years in dozens of reviews and literary histories; this is all very useful to scholars, yet mildly objectionable, for in dutifully concentrating on opinions of Norris expressed in obvious places, Marchand has missed much genuinely interesting, off-the-beaten-track comment. It would be illuminating, for example, to point out that Professor G. C. Knight's volume, *Superlatives,* contains a long portrayal of Vanamee, a character in *The Octopus,* as "The Greatest Lover" in English fiction, beating out Heathcliff by a shaggy lock; or that Yvor Winters has called *The Octopus* the only American novel of class struggle successfully setting in motion and complicating "certain dramas of private morality"; or that John Chamberlain has made a case for the same novel, rather than for the Dos Passos trilogy, as "our finest *collective* work of fiction."

ELAINE S. GOTTLIEB:

SELDEN RODMAN: *The Revolutionists.* Duell, Sloan, and Pearce.

Keeping events from becoming so important that they swallow the characters is the chief difficulty in writing historical plays, particularly panoramas such as the history of a revolution. Shakespeare succeeded in *Julius Caesar.* Though aware of the hazard, Selden Rodman, in his panorama of the Haiti rebellion, has allowed individual portraits to be submerged in the great, wild battle scene. Moreover, his scene moves too swiftly, so that it is not quite wild enough and becomes more map than landscape.

At the start of the play France is in the early stage of its Revolution; at the end Napoleon has been exiled. During this time Haiti proceeds from French white rule through that of the rebellious slaves, the liberal Toussaint, the fierce Dessalines, and the tyrannical Christophe, whose fortress on a mountain ledge resembles Hitler's castle. Christophe is further related to Hitler (as in the "Hail Christophe!" salute of his subjects) and to Napoleon, whom he admired and was fond of quoting. Hitler, too, has been compared with Napoleon. The entire story of the Haiti rebellion, with its race feuds and its forced labor under Christophe, so strongly suggests modern Germany that the moral is inescapable: dictators must fall, races must mingle, envious hatred—though a source of energy—leads to destruction and self-destruction only. The moral is high-sounding and unoriginal. Even if dictators must fall, the inevitability of the fall is not as tangible as the need to push them off their mountain peaks.

There seems to be no good reason for the play's being in blank verse; it is prosaic to the point of bareness, except in details of horror. Rodman has a genuine talent for explaining terrible things simply and with great impact: the suffocation of a garrison by sulphur candles, the mutilation of whites in cellars, the training of bloodhounds to disembowel blacks. Otherwise there is little realism. The characters are too often declaiming puppets used to expose the developments of plot or of history. Christophe is human because he has fears, and strength also; he is not merely an idea like the philosophical Toussaint, who is always a little

too good, too kind, too didactic. The women are unreal because they are all too feminin coquettes, almost in a trade-mark sense, so that what they say seems to have been guessed a

The Revolutionists would make a good movie, for in its present form the most interes ing action must occur offstage (though there is more direct drama in the second hal especially where Christophe is paralyzed and where he kills himself). One imagines close ups and long-shots of mob activity, of violence, of workmen building the fortress, of Na poleon. The films could simplify the intrigue and the discussion of intrigue, and could thereb sharpen the characters and clarify the action.

The illustrations by Rudolph C. von Ripper are generally grim, pantomimic, not com plex; his smaller sketches are better, more vivacious.

JEREMY INGALLS:

MARGARET WALKER: *For My People.* Yale University Press

Margaret Walker, 1942 prize winner in the Yale Series of Younger Poets, present poetry for—and also from—her own race. The first section, cadenced verses ripe in imager from the experience of both the urban Northern Negro and the Southern Negro, indictin the world they never made, challenges them to that world's re-making through strength bor of their long endurance. The second section speaks the Negro ballad, brisk humorous nar ratives of folk types, Molly Means, Kissie Lee, Yalluh Hammuh. The final section, "her ow kind of sonnet," as Stephen Vincent Benet observes, makes fourteen-line comments on he memories, concluding with a sonnet on her obligation and that of her people:

> Out of this blackness we must struggle forth
> from want of bread, of pride, of dignity.

Although the ballads make most immediate impact, authentic and high-spirited folk economy in story-telling, Miss Walker's greatest power, will develop, I believe, within the rhythm evolving in the first section of *For My People,* a rhythm and a style which, rooted ir the eloquence of the Negro preacher, the poet cultivates with a shrewder sense of design She is maturing a tropically rich imagery and a "deep song" rhythm into a genuine poetry of indignation and challenge.

BREWSTER GHISELIN:

KARL JAY SHAPIRO: *Person Place and Thing.* Reynal and Hitchcock.

Shapiro's more significant poems give each object treated its clarity of aspect and its proper fullness of meaning. He requires of himself compact and living statement; the sur faces of his work are often brilliant. Nearly all of his poems are rich in fresh detail; beside the train "The racing rabbits of the wire lope." Even poems such as "Drug Store," which tell us mostly what we already know, by their form transmute the scattered knowledge. Still better poems clarify obscurer aspects of experience, especially feelings too rich or subtle to name. A modest example is the account of moving day, "October 1," expressing at its con clusion the suffering entailed by change. More important is "Conscription Camp," which de fines the ironical plight of the conscript imprisoned in the clumsy form of his servitude. Such accurate poems help us to know what we are and are experiencing. Therefore they help us to be: to possess ourselves and our world.

They do not much help us to become. Helping us to know deeply the evil of our world, poems like "Conscription Camp" and "Druid Hill Park" prepare for action against the evil. But action springs from attitudes, inward consciousness, being: the future is made by inner change. The poetry that can give us our needed future is hard to identify. Certain qualities of "A Robbery" and "On Going to the Wars" (omitted from this collection) lead me to believe that Shapiro will write some of it.